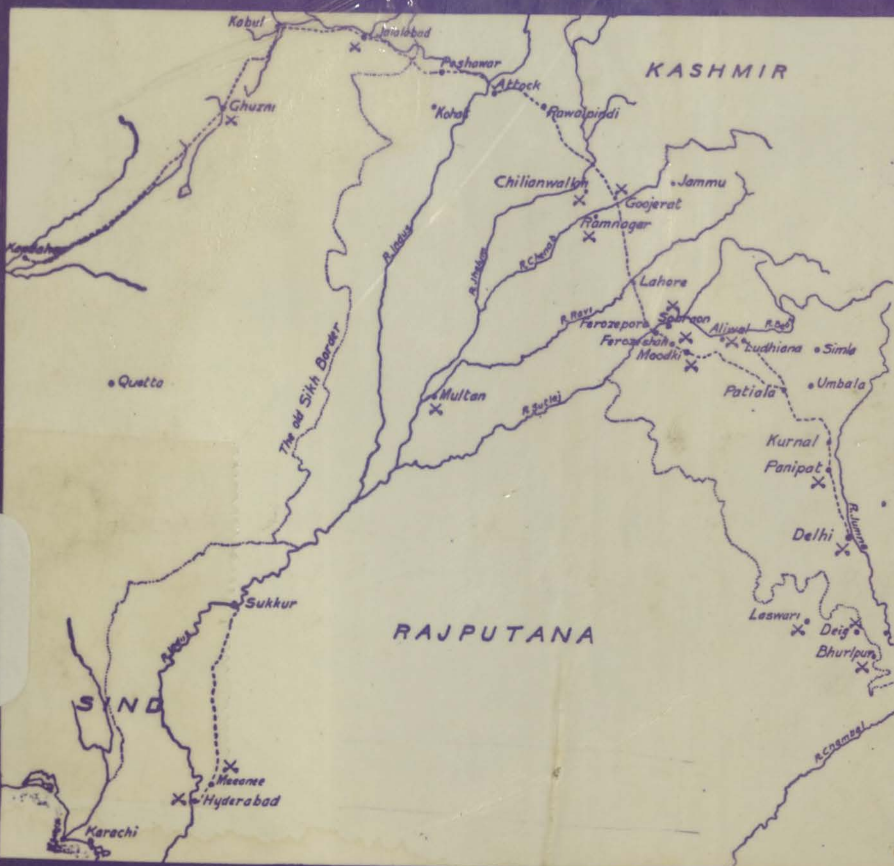
THE LURE OF THE INDUS

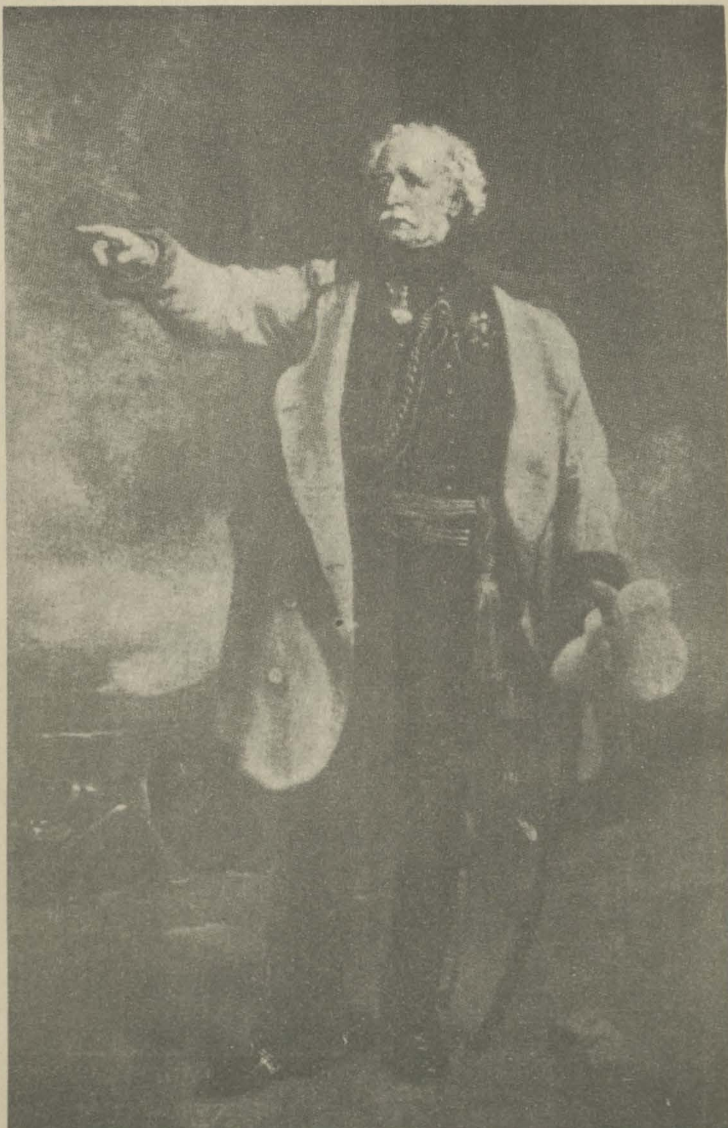
BEING

THE FINAL ACQUISITION OF INDIA BY THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

BY

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN





LORD GOUGH
In his "fighting" coat (which enabled him to be found by his staff and messengers).

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Colonel Commandant Royal Artillery

WITH 20 ILLUSTRATIONS IN HALF-TONE
AND 4 MAPS

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CHAPTER XII

ERRATA

Page 17, *line* 27. *For* "he" *read* "and."
,, 21, ,, 23. *For* "25th" *read* "29th."
,, 27, ,, 16. *For* "aggresses" *read* "aggression."
,, 28, ,, 32. *Delete* "the" *before* "Waterloo."
,, 30, ,, 31. *For* "Director" *read* "Directors."
,, 31, ,, 8. *For* "states" *read* "tributaries."
,, 40, ,, 29. *For* "MacNaghten" *read* "Macnaghten."
,, 40, ,, 30. *For* "Colven" *read* "Colvin."
,, 44, ,, 29. *For* "Karachi" *read* "Kurachi."
,, 50, ,, 6. *For* "Karachi" *read* "Kurachi."
,, 51, ,, 6. *For* "1854" *read* "1834."
,, 51, ,, 24. *For* "sapper and miner" *read* "sappers and miners."
,, 54. ,, 9. *For* "Karachi" *read* "Kurachi."
,, 67. ,, 21. *For* "Kalat-i-Ghilzai" *read* "Kelat-i-Ghilzai."
,, 80. ,, 34. *For* "1883" *read* "1888."

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

IN the text of this book I have explained how the territorial India of to-day was created, not by the Crown but by the East India Company, very unwillingly. I have remarked that it might also be said that it was the Company who did what almost might be called the Crown or the Nation's dirty work. That is to say that it carried out unpleasant work that had to be done by someone, for India, far more than for Great Britain, in the crushing of entirely irreformable, ruthless, impossible administrations. I have also tried to point out that this work came as the result of an irresistible if unrecognized drag of the natural limits of might and dominion and the grouping of races.

This book deals with five remarkable and hectic wars in India that were crowded into the first ten years of the young Queen's seat on the throne of the United Kingdom, viz., 1839–1849. Their importance and most especially the significance of their sequence has been largely hidden by two entirely different sets of circumstances. Firstly, those of immediately subsequent happening, such as the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny, and secondly, by the fact that almost all the Indian units concerned wiped themselves off the face of memory and history by their mutiny, while the European officers thereof, dead to make a mutineers' holiday or living broken-hearted in their English homes, were not there to perpetuate the memory of victories. To the few units of the British line that took part and bore the burden of the day, and still remain, is the memory kept green. The story of these campaigns, especially for them, were as famous and as glorious as ever the history of the Peninsular War.

Further I have remarked in the text, that when clever young men are planning a new heaven and a new earth

for India, and as some say a new hell, some reference to the old hell from which Sind, the Punjab, and Gwalior were rescued is not out of place.

SPELLING OF INDIAN NAMES

No attempt has been made to spell Indian names by any scientific method. The old spelling familiar from childhood gave us the mental phonetic conception of a place or name, and that has been for the most part retained. The battle names are generally spelt as on the medal clasps, e.g. Ferozeshuhr and Moodkee.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE,
November 1*st*, 1933.

THE LURE OF THE INDUS

PROLOGUE

INDIA AT THE ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA

MEET JOHN COMPANY

MEET John Company . . . *Jan Kampanee Bahadur*, otherwise the Honourable East India Company. It is important that you should do so, now that the Empire Builders are trying to find a new suit of clothes for India, because the whole of British India as we know it, otherwise than the upper part of Burma, was acquired under the ægis of the East India Company. When the Proclamation of Queen Victoria appeared in 1858 and the Crown assumed direct administration and responsibility, the foundations had all been done. From Cape Comorin to the Indus the Peninsula, the Continent, owned the sway of the Crown, the treaties of paramountcy and alliance with the Princes had all been completed, the last unwilling annexation, that of Oudh, had been made. For good or for evil, the whole of the Mogul territory with the exception of Afghanistan had become British, and the task of piecing together the broken bits into which the great Turkish Empire of Delhi had crashed was complete.

In the first ten years of the reign of good Queen Victoria when she was yet a hard-riding, merrily dancing girl-queen, bearing no resemblance to the

"Widdy at Windsor," there occurred in India five major wars in quick succession, so much so that the whole Bengal Army and part of the others were almost continuously in the field. Most of these wars occurred in the unconscious, unsought tendency of the land that was once Mogul, to regroup itself on the same lines. Only in one of the five did the Company (with the approval of the Crown) proceed of fell design, and that was in their Afghan policy of 1839. That policy and the war that resulted aimed in attaining the Mogul frontier as a sphere of influence, the others were because that Mogul Empire insisted on being reformed.

These five wars have never had the attention they deserve for several reasons. *Firstly*, because the coming of the Crimea diverted men's minds, while in Northern India the Mutiny of the Bengal Army wiped out much of the memory as well as the actors. *Secondly*, because countless corps who had gained renown therein disappeared in the ignominy of the Mutiny. Neither they nor their officers were to remain to keep the anniversaries of Meeanee, of Maharajpore, of Sobraon, Goojerat or Moodkee, all over the length of Hindustan. The corps had disappeared in the smoke, the officers were dead to make a Hindu holiday, or else, in the quiet of English homes, eating out their hearts with the knowledge that all they had given their lives to had disappeared. The histories of the Crimea and the Mutiny held the field in the publishing interest.

The history of these five wars is, of course, preserved by the corps of the British line which took part, but 75 per cent of the participating corps disappeared for ever. But because these ten years were so remarkable, because they were so pregnant with enduring history, and because they were so inevitable, it is worth while to show them as a whole, treading close on each other's

heels, pregnant with the fate of India and of the long future. Because of the namby-pamby outlook of many of the Victorian writers, because of the tendency to slobber of the earlier nineteenth century, and because political bias was often mistaken for history, justice has never been done to the policy which actuated the Afghan Wars, the Conquest of Scinde or the inevitability of the others. Further, certain military failures and ineptitudes, certain failures of Government to act up to the policy which they had initiated, have combined to misdescribe the facts of the period.

The Victorian wars aforesaid which took place between 1839 and 1849, and involved very large forces, were as follows:

The First Afghan War, lasting from 1839 to 1842, with its successes and disasters, its phases and its results.

The Conquest of Scinde, which was obviously ripe and a duty to humanity.

The Gwalior Campaign of 1843, when the last of the armies of the Feudal States elected to try its strength with the paramount power, and which once and for all put paramountcy on the record.

The Sutlej Campaign, otherwise the *First Sikh War*, when a swollen, mutinous Sikh army, out of hand and out of control, was encouraged by its own Government to hurl itself on to British India and to learn a lesson therefrom.

The Punjab Campaign, or *Second Sikh War*, when the Sikh Army once more tried to out British influence, thereby frustrating earnest British attempts at making an enduring Sikh principality.

It will be seen that the first was in pursuit of a wise policy too hastily conceived and miserably carried out. The second was unavoidable; the other three were also

forced on the British by the weighted pendulum of inevitability. Before, however, it is possible to make this astounding military drama leap from the pages of time for our delectation, it is necessary to put the play in its place by a short curtain-raising of history; to show India, with war apparently over, with the trade, education and humane development of the post-Waterloo mentality at work.

THE INDIA OF THE MARQUIS WELLESLEY

There came to India in 1798 after the feeble and somewhat disastrous regime of Sir John Shore that was void of all vision, one of the most remarkable of all the British servants of the Empire, in the shape of Lord Mornington of the Irish Wellesley family and elder brother of the Duke of Wellington. The system of India, the welding of the parts that makes the India of to-day, and the measures that put a Federal India of 353,000,000 folk on the *tapis*, was the system envisaged by this busy far-seeing little Governor-General known to his staff as "The Lord," who was later to be created the Marquis Wellesley. The story of his stirring rule of seven years duration, a period that ensured continuity, is no part of this book of later happenings, but the India that he left was practically the India of Queen Victoria, that India, that is to say, that owned British Dominion when that slip of a lass suddenly felt the weight of the Empire on her brow. In a dozen years an uncontrollable fate had changed the India of Wellesley to the India, speaking territorially, that we know to-day.

When Mornington first took up the reins, both the security of the Madras Presidency and the peace of the State of Hyderabad and of the Mahrattas, was jeopardized by the bitter hostility of the son of that usurping

Afghan soldier of fortune, Haider Ali who had seized Mysore from its Hindu rulers. Three times had the usurpers been at war with the British. The last time in 1792, Tippu had been severely beaten by the old soldier Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis. Tippu had been spared. His sons had been taken as hostages, and it was hoped that he would now live in peace and amity with his neighbours. But no Afghan mind could do that, and to make it harder, here was one Napoleon Bonaparte invading Egypt, full of visions of Eastern conquests, issuing proclamations, calling heaven and hell to join with him, in destroying the English in India, and writing letters to his faithful Citoyen Tippu to bear his share in the mighty future of liberation. French officers and soldiers driven from the Carnatic, were now at Mysore, Tippu could not bide by his treaties in such alluring prospects, and the new young Governor-General began to see visions. He saw that Tippu must go, and that forthwith, as that chief was now attacking all and sundry, and raiding far down from his uplands into the peaceful coasts.

Lord Mornington gave him his warning and then mustered his armies, the same Grand Army that Lord Cornwallis had led, only grander. Tippu took alarm, he had gone too far, Bonaparte in Egypt was also far away and "lang o' coming," so he seized the big drum ecclesiastic, the great drum of Islam, he massacred and circumcised thousands of Hindus, "Islam over all and the faith in danger." He also sent the same call to the great, or what seemed the great, Afghan Emperor, the grandson of Ahmed Shah the Abdulli, who in 1761 had destroyed the whole Mahratta host, by the Black Mango Tree, on the historic field of Panipat. The Afghan Frontier was still far south at the "Head of India," actually on the River Sutlej. "Come, let us

drive these English away once and for all. Let us make a lock, stock and barrel job of it. Come down, oh! Zaman Shah, oh! 'King of the Age' and join your hard-pressed compatriots here. Bring Turk and Mogul and Afghan! Bring Sayad and Sheikh! And all the Green Standards you wot of."

Now, Shah Zaman or Zaman Shah, whichever way you like, was nothing loath. Twenty-seven times had his grandfather swept into India. His father, Timur Shah, lived on the name of his mighty forerunner and the prestige of his father, and Shah Zaman was not a much better man. But the machine was there, and the drums and standards of Islam. Shah Zaman made haste to come, but his own affairs were too urgent. Afghanistan is really "Yaghistan," the "Country of the unruly." Rebellions at Kandahar, trouble at Herat, invasions on the Oxus, were too much for him, and his legions were recalled to march north. Fierce, mad Tippu, who it was said had never been sane since his even fiercer father, Haider Ali, had flogged him before all his court, went to his fate alone. The British—and I use the word because Southern India was largely conquered by Scottish troops, there being Ian MacLeans and Macintoshes of every hue in Mysore to this day—marched and fought some desperate battles. Arthur Wellesley, commanding his 33rd Foot, was asleep at the critical moment and by some ill chance failed to do his bit, and nearly lost his commission thereby, which is another story. Tippu fell fighting in his gates, and his dynasty was over. Hindu Mysore was restored, when the English might have taken it for themselves with none to say them nay—agitators please remember.

Lord Mornington's mind had been hard at work, Tippu and Bonaparte and all their flummery was over but, there could not be two kings in Brentford, and it

was now pretty clear that in the broken Mogul Empire there was another power striving for paramountcy and prepared to stick at nothing to achieve it. The Mahratta States, or rather the five of the larger ones, always at enmity, had also the power to combine. Sindia, or as men then wrote it "Scindiah," the Maharajah of Gwalior, was the most important of them, although the Peishwa at Poona was their nominal head in the place that he as minister had filched from the feeble descendants of Sivaji. Sindia had been copying the Company, and had large forces of horse, foot and artillery trained on the Company's, i.e. the European model. A large officer and cadet service was his, English, French, half-breed, and he had given the revenues of the territory between the Ganges and Jumna, known as the Doab, the "Two rivers," to the French commandant of his Westernized forces, Count De Boigne, now succeeded by M. Perron, for their upkeep. He had occupied Delhi and the shadow that was once the great Mogul, now an aged pantaloon blinded by an Afghan minister, in vengeance it was said for castration at his hands when a lad, lay in a Mahratta dungeon. The great seal of the Mogul, still an emblem of dread and a sign of power, was in Sindia's hands.

Already had the Mahrattas watered their horses in the Indus. Sindia was openly intriguing with the other Mahrattas, and even with Mogul Hyderabad, to form one vast union and drive the red English into the sea.

THE SECOND AND THIRD MAHRATTA WARS

And Lord Mornington pondered. Indeed, there could not be two kings in Brentford! Briton or Mahratta must dominate the land since Turk and Afghan had failed. That there was only one way out was apparent to the prophetic statesman's mind, twitter the peddlers

in Leadenhall Street never so petulantly. There were stout hearts in India who would follow his lead, the Company's and Queen's services bristled with them.

England should be the paramount ruler, every chief should come into an offensive and defensive alliance, every chief should keep within his own boundaries. All should have a subsidiary British-Indian force at or near their capitals to protect them. Each should also maintain a contingent for the help of the British, the paramount, nay their paramount, power and protector. No longer should highly strung chiefs arm fitfully when the rains were over, lest their neighbours start out on the yearly *mulk-geri*, "land snatching," that had been so prevalent since the Imperial authority had crashed. Once more should the peasant till the fields in peace and the merchant send forth his caravans unarmed.

But Sindia was equally bent on being paramount and had already dubbed himself *The Vizier* of the Empire or what was left of it . . . a pretty Vizier!

How necessary it was that peace between the great chiefs should be encompassed, the Governor-General had seen under the very walls of the Peishwa's capital. There, Sindia's and Holkar's armies, both led by European free-lances, had fought a deadly battle. They needed protection against one another, and the British provinces needed protection against each and all of them. As they armed and threatened, one of them, the Peishwa, had already allied himself with the British, and had been supported by a British force under General Arthur Wellesley. But as Sindia and the Bhonsla would listen to no reason, two main armies with several lesser forces took up the running. General, better known as Lord Lake, advanced with the Grand Army on Agra and Delhi, while Wellesley swept up the Deccan. The victories are famous, Alligarh, Laswari, Delhi on the East, Assaye, Argaum, Gahwilghar

on the West. At Delhi the blinded Mogul was rescued from his dungeon, and restored to such personal dignities as a blind man can enjoy. The French officers were all removed. Sindia, the Bhonsla, and the Gaikwar made peace. The "French State," otherwise the Doab, between Jumna and the Ganges was annexed, as also the area round Delhi. The Emperor was given sovereign power within his fortress-palace.

Then the fifth Potentate of the Mahratta Federation, who had held aloof from hatred of Sindia, suddenly attacked and in the hot season of 1804 we had another Mahratta war on our hands.

Colonel Monson, sent against him, over-marched his troops badly and met with a terrible disaster which upset the fat into the fire. The Jāt Rajah of Bhurtpore joined the enemy, though Sindia was wise enough to stand by his recent treaty. Holkar attacked the newly-held Delhi and was beaten off, pursued in a very famous operation by Lake and all his cavalry, and was ridden over at Futehgarh. Then his infantry was smashed at Deig, and that goose was cooked. Lord Lake too confident by now, turned on Bhurtpore without his siege artillery. His 76th Foot, his Horse Artillery and his 25th Light Dragoons were his stock-in-trade for his more daring feats. With them and his Native Infantry he made four unsuccessful attempts to storm Bhurtpore, losing several thousand men, while all India chuckled. Then he desisted. The Rajah sent to congratulate him on his peerage and asked for peace. But the failure before Bhurtpore and the retreat of Colonel Monson, took some forgetting in an India, in which every bazaar has its ear to the ground. Nevertheless, the Mahratta chiefs now entered into alliance, received protective forces at or near their capitals, maintained the required contingents, and the great policy of the Governor-General was complete.

India was now in one great framework of peace, in which trade and big business was to flourish, with Britain and the British flag the protector of all. It was the vision and work of a great man in a country whose system had crashed. It aimed at alliances not absorbtion of the Princes' States. From this time, it may be said, that no Princes who kept their treaties, were ever brought to the ground, although, in Lord Dalhousie's Governor-Generalship, the right of lapse prevailed for a while, that is to say, the absorbtion of certain States in which the ruling family had no heirs. Happily that rule was discontinued by the liberal recognition of the right to adopt.

But the British Government and the Court of Directors of the Company were appalled at what had been done and at the astounding heritage that had fallen to them. Their vision failed to grasp that their own safety was concerned and that they must dominate or fall. They only saw an Empire they had not dreamed of, and a treasure chest that was for the moment more than empty. They deliberately endeavoured to destroy the work of the Wellesleys. The dying Lord Cornwallis was sent back a second time, now vowedly in favour of the suicidal tendencies of the British Parliament and the Court of Directors, to smash the system. Fortunately for England he passed away in 1805, but the same spirit that had impeached Clive and endeavoured to martyr Warren Hastings was at work. It brought its Nemesis, in several terrible and unnecessary wars, with half the work to do over again, and the unavoidable return to Lord Wellesley's system. The die of paramountcy was cast. The unholy rule of the Mahratta, himself the free-booter of India, allowed widespread nests and rookeries of mounted land pirates to grow up in the jungles and fastnesses of the Nerbudda. Thence each year vast

hordes of the most atrocious, rapacious and the cruellest free-booters the world has ever seen, sallied forth to rob, rape and destroy all whose hands could not keep their heads. Another great campaign East and West was necessary to destroy them and the Mahratta chiefs who supported them. But before even that came to pass, a hard campaign had also to be fought, in a new direction, induced by the contempt for our prestige that the fatuity of the folk at Home had displayed. This time the scene of action was to be the submontane tracts of the Himalaya.

BRITAIN THE HEIR TO THE MOGUL THRONE

The Mogul Emperor was blind, there was no heir fit to rule, nor was there anywhere left over which they could rule. Those familiar with the story of India under Warren Hastings will remember how, driven from Delhi by the Mahrattas, the Mogul had been set up by that statesman as a ruler in the Doab, and how eventually relying on Mahratta promises, he had gone back to Delhi, only to be defeated and blinded. There has been an attempt of late to prove that the British were in no sense the heir of the Mogul. It is true that the grant to Clive of the *Diwani*, that is to say, the authority to administer, of Bengal, proved nothing. The titles given by blind Shah Alum to Lord Lake proved nothing, but people who argue thus are but tilting at windmills and men of straw. Britain succeeded the Mogul by the force of circumstances, and sat in the place of the Mogul, as the Mahratta had schemed to do, by their own strength, where all was ruin. At the centre of Northern India, they were the only power that was a going concern, the only power that cared the least for the people of India, or had definite ideas on justice, humanity and security. The Mogul Empire was what it was, because of the size

and conformation of India, and the feebleness of much of its people. India lay in islands from the Indus to the Southern Seas, by force of many circumstances and conditions.

Because Britain—The East India Company was but the British Crown in commission—had not realized her own might and destiny, and how complete was the crash of any system in India that could maintain order, right and justice, she elected to use the Mogul name for a while—elected to do so by the indefeasible right of *de facto* possession, backed to some extent by a feeling of tenancy.

The Mogul name was still a name of power and of dread in India. It reached in some mysterious influence to the uttermost end of the land. So Britain, i.e. the Court of Directors, plus the Parliamentary Control long set up by various " Regulating " and other acts, rather appalled at her position, carried on. The coinage remained as Mogul coinage till 1835 when rupees with King William IV's head first appeared. But it was facts that enforced the use of the Mogul heritage of power, and the title was by no means such a fictitious one as that under which the Tartar ruler of the house of Othman, claimed to be Caliph in Islam.

The Mogul Empire had long included Afghanistan as far as the Hindu Kush, and even Turkistan to the Oxus. Rajput India too had once stretched to the Hindu Kush, Indians, Hindu and Buddhist had inhabited its valleys, and long after they had been merged in Islam, Rajput chiefs led the Mogul Armies to the Oxus. The Hindu Kush, was the natural limit of India. What does it mean ? *Kushidan* is Persian " to kill." Is it because the lofty abode of snow is the limit of endurance for the sons of warm India ? No man knows, but in India *Khush* is " happy." Hence the old British jest, full of

strategical and human pregnancy. "How to preserve British India?" "Why, keep the Hindu Kush (*Khush*)?"

When, however, Lord Lake came to Delhi the Northern Provinces of India had long gone. Ahmed Shah, the horse soldier of the great Nadir Shah Quli, who had taken the Peacock throne from Delhi, had founded the Afghan or Durani Empire, and that Empire had a nominal frontier so far down, as already stated, as the River Sutlej. With the Mogul Throne in extinction it was to Shah Zaman at Lahore, to whom Tippu in the South had appealed for aid.

And this brings us to the important part of the story so far as this particular book is concerned, viz., to show how the lure of the limits of the Mogul Throne fixed by nature as the limit of a natural India drew the unwilling Company on to its destiny and to accomplish the India of to-day.

THE STRATEGICAL APPREHENSIONS OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT

Ever since the conclusion of the Third Mahratta War, the British in India found themselves in the grip of new perplexities. The flummery of the First Consul and his Citoyen Tippu was over, and the French soldiers had been largely removed both from the States of Southern India and those of the Mahratta chiefs. But the Emperor Napoleon was now on the scene rather than First Consul Bonaparte, and with him his ally the Tsar of Russia. Napoleon and Nicholas were concocting schemes for the subjugation of the Khanates, the domination of Persia and the advance of France and Russia to India. It was the fashion of a latter day to call them grandiose, but with our knowledge and experience of Russia in the

nineteenth century, and also of the almost unlimited supply of transport camels in Central Asia, we cannot but admit that the Governor-General of those days and his advisers, in their fears, were far-seeing men. Then they had inherited in 1805 the great dread of Northern India, the fear of the Afghans. Twenty-seven times had the Durani Emperor Ahmed Shah crossed the Indus. In 1761, at the last battle of Panipat he had destroyed the Mahratta hosts and set the Mogul Emperor on such feet as were left to him. His successors time and again returned to enforce their frontier on the Sutlej. The Punjab was forced to acquiesce in this overlordship, yet the rumours of these constant moves of the Afghan hordes had caused a terrible dread. The threat of the Afghan was used by mothers to quiet their unruly children. Five years before the British came to Delhi, Shah Zaman who had come south again was recalled to the Oxus by trouble in the west of his Empire, and to a young Sikh noble and soldier, Runjhit Singh, who had helped him get his guns over the Chenab, he confided the Governorship of Lahore Province. The British then found themselves *vis-à-vis* an Afghan frontier, and the whole country-side alive with dread of an Afghan return and full of stories of the Afghan terror. It was indeed to counter this dread and guard this frontier that the great station of Meerut was formed and soon that of Kurnal on the frontier of the Phulkian Sikh chiefs. During the futile years of Sir George Barlow, and the first years of Lord Minto, restoring the anarchy in Central India due to Cornwallis and Barlow and the orders of the Company, had kept the British busy. But it was, about 1811, possible to think of and form a policy that would keep Afghans and Russians at bay. The weakening of the Afghans by the quarrels within that Empire and the blinding of Shah Zaman, had lessened the Afghan danger,

and it had allowed young Runjhit Singh to come to power as a leader of the quarrelling Sikhs across the Sutlej. His growing power was all to the good, and the great scheme now took the form of an outer and inner line of buffer states against the French and Russian menace. The Sikh State of Lahore, yearly increasing at Afghan expense, the States of Bahawalpur and Sind on the lower Indus were the proposed inner line, while outside this, it was hoped to organize Persia and Afghanistan in an *entente,* in which a friendly British influence and alliance would combine the whole to resist any encroachment. The British wished their frontier to remain on the Sutlej, and could but approve as Runjhit Singh completed his Sikh State.

The first attempts to interest Persia in resisting Russian aggresses and the persistence of the French democratic agents, who were as active then as the agents of the Soviets to-day against anything British, was made in 1799, when a mission under Captain Malcolm, then starting on his famous career, was sent to Teheran. It also aimed at putting Persian pressure on Shah Zaman at Herat. In 1809 both Lord Minto and the Foreign Office were engaged in the same quest, Minto withdrawing his mission under the now Brigadier-General Malcolm in favour of the Foreign Office one. In 1809, Mountstuart Elphinstone was sent to the Afghan Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk, younger brother of Shah Zaman, now blind with none to do him reverence, and Charles Metcalfe to Runjhit Singh at Lahore both to present the necessity for a great union against France and Russia's advance on India.

It is necessary to remember these points as making the similar activities of the early days of Queen Victoria intelligible and but a sequel to earlier thoughts and fears.

THE NEPAL AND PINDARI WARS

It is not right to treat this first rebuilding of the broken India without some reference to two very striking episodes both of the same intent. During the Mogul debacle, the Gurkhas from Nepal had been encroaching more and more on the Hindu hill folk, and establishing a rule over them that was nothing but a ruthless oppression under which all society groaned. Further, the Nepal Government was extending its conquests far up towards the Punjab along the hills. Fighting with Sikh and Rajput was in progress while incursions into even administered India was becoming more rife, and all remonstrances were unheeded. To drive out these determined fighters, a two years campaign from 1814 to 1816, was necessary, campaigns spread over six hundred miles of frontier, marked by many vicissitudes. Among them were the death of "Gillespie of Comber," the hero of the Vellore Mutiny, the ineptitudes of many elderly commanders, the successes of Sir David Ouchterlony and the end was the final expulsion of the Gurkhas from all Indian territory. With the Treaty of Peace and amity following a century-old alliance between Nepal and Britain, in which Nepal's troops have been sent to our aid in the Indian Mutiny and in the World War, vast numbers of Nepalis serve in our Army. This arose from the custom founded when the prisoners of war taken in the War of 1814–1816 were, after the British manner, immediately enlisted into four local battalions now among the most famous units in India. This war which was a major one, and all-wonderful in its results, would have attracted much more notice had its final successes not taken place in the year of the Waterloo.

One other great war was to be necessary before the Mahrattas could accept their proper place and remain

within their own boundaries. Mention has been made of the astounding growth of the nests of land pirates that had arisen on the Nerbudda. By 1813, the Earl of Moira, a well-known soldier, better known to the Army as Francis Rawdon, came to India. It was he who put an end to the Gurkha trouble, and was then compelled to direct his attention to the Pindari scourge which was passed all bearing in its tally of outrage and suffering. He called on the Mahratta chiefs whose territories they impinged on, well knowing that they, little better than Pindaris themselves, were secretly supporting them. The last straw in the pirate misdemeanours was a raid into the British territory of the Northern Circars in which they destroyed three hundred and thirty-nine villages. Lord Moira made his preparations on a large scale knowing the trouble that might be awaiting a match.

The main army was to move up from the Deccan, but before any moves took place two of the chiefs of the old confederacy turned with great treachery on their subsidiary forces. Baji Rao II, the Peishwa, on that date of battle and repeated excitement the 5th November, poured an army of many thousands against the small subsidiary force, and was defeated once and for all at Kirkee in open fight. At Nagpur the Bhonsla did the same. The battles of Kirkee and the defence of Seetabuldee Hill, near Nagpur, by the two subsidiary forces are two of the most famous incidents in the history of the time in India. The Governor-General himself marched on Gwalior lest Sindia should follow their example. The Pindari war commenced as the Fourth Mahratta War. The notorious Holkar of Lord Lake's day was dead, Mulhar Rao his son was a child, but the army of Indore caught the excitement and marched off to its doom. The main British-Indian armies came up from the Deccan, the Peishwa was chased till he surrendered, the Bhonsla's

army was destroyed at the "Battle," as distinct from the earlier "Defence" of Seetabuldee. Holkar's forces, the army of Indore numbering 20,000 men, was badly beaten in a pitched battle at Mehidpur. The main armies being now driven from the field, the time of the Pindaris had come, and by dint of hard marching, constant riding and untiring activity of small parties, these outlaws were destroyed, their fastnesses routed out, their leaders killed or captured. Peace now reigned on the land for several years. One more legacy of the past however remained, one of those defeats unavenged, which however much the British might wish to let bygones be bygones, was to insist on being settled once and for all. The gallant dead who had died in vain for Lord Lake were not to lie as a peace offering.

BHURTPORE AND AVA

Bhurtpore, the Jāt stronghold, still remembered its continued repulse of Lord Lake's assaults and affected contempt of the British. In 1825 the ruler died, and a wicked uncle seized the throne, defying the orders of the Agent to the Governor-General, and would not give place to the heir. The Agent, the veteran Ouchterlony, knowing his man and what was at stake, called on all troops within hail to march. Lord William Bentinck, now Governor-General, demurred and overruled old Ouchterlony's orders hoping that a settlement would be arrived at. Ouchterlony's heart was broken at the affront, even though his course soon proved to be the only possible one. The Commander-in-Chief, Lord Combermere,[1] the Stapylton-Cotton of Waterloo fame, marched a large

[1] It is of him that this story is told. The Director of the Company demurred at his being appointed, considering him a somewhat stupid man. "Yes," said the Duke of Wellington, "that may be, but he is the man to take Bhurtpore for you."

army with every big gun in Northern India. Bhurtpore had now had time to prepare and had brought to his support a large number of Afghan mercenaries. Heavy guns and sappers brought their skill to bear, huge mines were driven under moat and wall, and the place stormed in the best style. That was the end of it, the rightful heir was placed on his throne and Bhurtpore took its place among one of the faithful states in the network of Feudal States, where it remains to this day.

PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY

Lord William, whose *métier* was peace, education and progress in the arts, was compelled to one more war. The repeated outrages on British trade and shipping by the King of Burma, and his refusal of all redress, added to the pronounced contumely with which, after the manner of the Chinese, British remonstrance were treated, made a campaign inevitable. Badly managed as it was in the administrative side, it produced victory. The price of defeat was certain provinces of Lower Burma annexed by Britain. Then it really did seem as if wars might cease and the arts and progress of peace go forward. There were plenty of new things coming to bring wealth to all concerned, in the way of expanding trade ; roads and canals were to be planned to exorcise the terrible bogey of seasonal famines ; education was to go forward ; the Thugs must be rooted out. No one dreamed of further extension of territory, whatever the Mogul dynasty may have held, and both Crown and Company knew they had almost more than they could do their duty by.

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THE FIRST WAR. AFGHANISTAN, 1839–1842

CHAPTER I

THE MISUNDERSTOOD DRAMA OF THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR

THE EVE OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

YOU must still be asked to meet John Company, but John Company under the influence of peace and good-will that the end of the Napoleonic wars and the recovery from the misery that followed, was working in Great Britain and her dependencies. The historical prologue has put the map on the table. With the Pindaris gone for ever, the corpses of the Thugs swinging in chains at the cross-roads, civilization and peaceful trading, the making of roads and the planning of canals were having pride of place. *Sati*, the burning of widows, had been forbidden, and though exalted widows wept their hearts out, yet educated Hindu opinion was tacitly agreeing with the New Law. Bhurtpore had been stormed these eleven years past, and not a dog barked in the whole of India. The British Frontier was on the Sutlej at one small point of contact, but the bulk of her India was covered, on the north, by the protected Sikh States.

All this time, since the days when he, with his tongue in his cheek, had accepted at Afghan hands the governorship of the Lahore province, the astute and masterful Runjhit Singh had built up a Sikh kingdom. He had gradually driven the Afghans out of Rawal-pindi, out of Multan, captured Kashmir, the Mogul province which, in common with the Punjab, Ahmed Shah the Afghan

conqueror had tried to separate from India, and had actually crossed the Indus, into what was considered Afghanistan. He had even taken Peshawur and the riverein provinces of the Derajat, " the country of the people who live in tents."

During Lord William Bentinck's rule of prosperity, there had been little save the advance of Russia into the still distant Khanates beyond the Oxus to disturb the horizon. The rise of this strong Sikh state was all to the good in British eyes, as supplying the barrier to the Afghan inroads that India wanted. The Sikh element in the state was small, but it was virile, the vast Moslem population of the Punjab were content, and India could get on with the business of development and those humanities for the institution of which the reign of " Billy " Bentinck is still famous.

But one of the pressing matters was the opening of the Indus to steamer trade and the security of the sailing traffic. The Amirs of Sind who controlled many hundred miles of the lower reaches had broken away from their overlords of a half-century, the Afghan Empire. Tolls, and oppressive treatment of the enterprising Indian boatmen were beyond all belief, and as much of the freight was destined for, and many of the folk were subjects of, Lahore, it was not likely that Runjhit Singh would stand it for ever. But it was not desirable that the Sikh rule should conquer Moslems far down the Indus. Sind was really a derelict Mogul province, temporarily with the Durani Empire, and like all Asiatic subject states, not paying revenue to its overlords a day longer than necessary, especially since the Durani state was in abeyance.

Afghanistan had broken up. The " Imperial family " of the Sadozai clan of the Durani had been ousted by the Barakzais, a clan led by a remarkable group of fierce,

ruthless brothers with a large following. Zaman Shah, the Emperor had been blinded, Shah Sujah, his brother who had succeeded was a fugitive. Herat was a separate state under one of the Royal family, but the other provinces were semi-independent under several of the Barakzai brothers, of whom the ablest and also perhaps the most ruthless, if the palm could be awarded, was Dost Muhammad, "The Friend of Muhammad," ruler in Kabul, who it would seem might succeed in his ambition of reuniting the provinces of the Durani Empire. But that meant taking from the Sikhs of the Punjab their conquests. Runjhit Singh had organised a large army armed and dressed in the European manner, trained by French generals, officered to some extent by British, French and American adventurers or derelicts, drilled by men who had served the Company. This formidable force, invariably beating the Afghans in the open field, had a lively dread of penetrating into the mountains, but was quite capable of holding its own and all it had acquired.

Runjhit Singh, however, was ageing prematurely, drunk with power, with spirits, and a slave in his later years to every sort of sexual excess, with no likely son to take the reins. Three Rajput brothers from the hills, with their armies and their ambitions, were prominent factors, and the prospect of peace was indeed clouding over. If the buffer state collapsed, anarchy would once more supervene in Northern India; and the British wanted peace for the Peninsula.

With these gathering clouds, Lord Auckland succeeded in 1831 to the Governor-Generalship and came, too, with orders from England to take special note as to the Central Indian position, the advance of Russia and conditions which might revive the lively apprehensions of the Napoleonic period.

THE OPENING UP OF ASIA

Reference has already been made to the missions ahead of the British frontiers that Lord Minto's Government had sent, and how Shah Shujah had not only given a very cordial reception to Mountstuart Elphinstone, but the latter had been struck with his gracious personality. That indeed is the gift of the Afghan, even when most unreliable. Shah Shujah was now a fugitive in India; neither he nor his blinded elder brother, Shah Zaman, could ride the horse of their grandfather. Their father, Timur Shah, had but done so on the prestige of his father's name. The Durani Empire lay in pieces. The remarkable group of brothers referred to, known as the "Barakzai brothers," the sons of one Payindah Khan of the Barakzai clan of the same Durani race as whence came the Sudozai, the Royal clan. Payindah Khan had been put to death by Zaman Shah, and Fath Khan, his eldest son, was Vizier to Shah Mahmud, another of Shah Zaman's brothers who was for a short while on the Afghan throne. Because his wild young brother, Dost Muhammad, was said to have violated the Shah's zenana and dishonoured the Shah's daughter, her brother Shah Kamran put out the Vizier's eyes with his dagger. It has been said of this abominable act, that "The shout of Vizier Fath Khan as the knife of the executioner was thrust into his visual organs was that of the expiring Afghan monarchy!" There was not much room for affection between the two families!

The Barakzai brothers had each an eye to the main chance. They were governors of the provinces and were now setting up as kings. Dost Muhammad by general repute the ablest and best, and as the best goes the least scrupulous, ruled in Kabul, Ghuzni and Jalalabad only. Another had Kashmir, a third, Peshawur, a fourth,

Kandahar, while at Herat alone ruled as related, Shah Kamran, an unpleasant nephew of the Shah Shujah. Afghanistan was in pieces. The Sikhs had taken Kashmir and now in 1837, Peshawur. The Afghans were determined to retake Peshawur and the Derajat, which the Sikh had also acquired. Each and all of the Afghan chiefs, these Barakzai brothers, were appealing to the Governor-General of India as their real instinctive paramount for help and recognition. Even Runjhit Singh was asking him to say that he should keep Peshawur.

All the while Shah Shujah was either in Lahore or in British Ludhiana, sometimes the sport of cunning Runjhit Singh who tricked him out of the famous and ancient Mogul jewel the Koh-i-Noor, sometimes at peace in the British fold, always persistent in endeavouring to get enough money and men together to get back his throne. Nor had he been an entire failure. In 1834 with regiments raised in the Punjab, under one or two Eurasian officers, he had actually retaken Kandahar.

The Governor-General was therefore faced with the following problems.

First, steamers had already come into being, and now was the time to open up the splendid waterways of the Indus and its five tributaries, as the Ganges was being opened up. The rivers were a world possession and not the squabble fields of the petty chiefs on their banks.

Second, a bitter struggle was apparently to be perennial between Sikh and Afghan on the Peshawur border at least, and the dispossessed Shah, the rightful ruler of Afghanistan, was at his gates, while the stories of his large following in Afghanistan were sedulously cultivated and were not entirely untrue. Nobody loved the Barakzai brothers.

Third, the whole of Europe and especially England were now interested in Central Asia. A Lieutenant Burnes of the Bombay Army had been on a remarkable unofficial tour across the Oxus and had been much lionized at home on his return. Lord Auckland had met him in England a year or so before. With the collapse of the old powers and order in Central Asia, the States needed reorganizing and regrouping in the interests of all civilization.

Lord Auckland now sent Burnes off to Kabul to interview Dost Muhammad and generally see to trade and the question of security against Russia.

Burnes found Dost Muhammad, afterwards well known to us as "The Dost," the local Barakzai, very friendly towards England, very anxious for British support and quite prepared to study trade prospects and the wealth that would result, and feeling that he would, with a little help, be able to reunite the dismembered Afghanistan. His attractive personality had taken Burnes' fancy, as it did all who met him. He was anxious to refuse admission to a Russian envoy who was on his way, but Burnes advised that he should be admitted. In any case, he seemed a very good horse to back and seemed to have the support of a large number of his fellow-countrymen.

THE TRIPARTITE TREATY

In the meantime, the policy of the hour had been much studied by a group of three able civilian secretaries in Lord Auckland's entourage, viz. W. MacNaghten, of the well-known Eton family, Torrens and Colven. They saw that there was room for a great British policy of influence, that should bring peace and trade. Macnaghten and Torrens had both begun life as soldiers

and then transferred to the Civil Service, while Colvin was a product of Haileybury. They were undoubtedly men well read in Eastern matters, students of Eastern languages and well acquainted with the political and strategical thoughts of the period. The fact that Burnes had no authority to clinch agreements on behalf of the Governor-General had militated against the success of his mission while the Russian had definite offers to make. Reluctantly, apparently, the Dost had listened to the Russ, and it seemed that he was likely to be hostile, however much Burnes might think otherwise.

Captain Wade, the able young political officer accredited to Lahore, who lived at Ludhiana and who was a *persona grata* with Runjhit Singh, was in close touch with the refugee Shah who was often at Ludhiana, where he kept all his family.

The clever secretaries, backed to some extent by Wade, conceived the plan of having Afghanistan in their pocket by restoring the Shah to "the throne of his fathers," in pursuance of a treaty of alliance with Runjhit Singh, which should clear up the trouble between the countries. Already had Runjhit Singh helped the Shah in one of his attempts, in return for promises *re* Peshawur and the return to Hindudom of the Gates of Somnath. When Lord Ellenborough brought the gates down, every Englishman scoffed, quite oblivious of the fact that Runjhit Singh himself had started the idea. To Lord Auckland and the people in London, this really seemed the way to secure all their objects. Influence in Central Asia, buffer states between India and Russia, peace on the Indus. Lord Auckland's advisers knew when and how the constant Afghan inroads had stirred Sikh hatred of the Moslem. When Burnes returned to press his view that the Dost was the man for our money, he found that the other policy held the field. After all,

Burnes was a very young man, and his judgment had no backing from his past career. He was overruled, and as Runjhit Singh would not enter into the Afghan engagements unless Britain was a partner thereto, there was signed in Simla in June 1838[1] the famous Tripartite Treaty between the British, Runjhit Singh and Shah Shujah.

This led us farther than we had perhaps wished, but there it was. The Shah, supported by a force of his British and Sikh allies, would enter Afghanistan at the head of his own contingent raised by him, but this time officered not by European adventurers and Eurasians but by British officers lent for the purpose.

There was, however, another complication. The Persians had started to besiege Herat, the Shah believing that he could gain compensation for losses to Russia by asserting a nebulous claim to that fertile province. Indeed the sovereignty and suzereignty in that part of the world had changed hands so often that almost anyone might produce a logical claim to anyone else's land, if he were strong enough to take it. But a treaty with Afghanistan and Persia already premised the integrity of Afghanistan. The British Minister in Tehran arrived in the Persian camp before Herat, to try and make the Shah desist, but as Russia advised him to proceed, nothing happened. Then it was that a young subaltern of Bombay Artillery, one Eldred Pottinger, who happened to be travelling there, took an unofficial hand, and became the pillar of the defence and the idol of the townsmen.

Because this siege was in progress it was at first intended that General Sir Harry Fane should lead a

[1] The treaty was signed in the famous old house round which the present Chapslee has been built and which was the residence of Lord Auckland and the Misses Eden.

considerable force into Afghanistan to force the Persians to go, as well as to support the Shah. At the same time, the Governor-General sent a military and naval force to the Gulf of Persia to occupy the island of Karag, not far from the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab.

The Mr. William Macnaghten aforesaid, who had negotiated the break with Runjhit Singh, was appointed Envoy to the Court of the Shah, and was therefore entrusted with the carrying out of the enterprise.

THE MORALITY OF THE BRITISH POLICY

As we shall see this policy was destined to end in failure after gloomy tragedy and bitter shame, redeemed however so far as honour and prestige went by reason of the military operations that closed the episode. Failure brings its own punishment. All the goody-goody writers of a somewhat decadent period of thought had a great deal of comment to make on the immoral invasion of a friendly neighbour. That was a feeling born of ignorance of the real conditions or of their wilful misinterpretation. Whether the policy was a wise one or whether we could have implemented it better is another matter. It was possibly very ill-judged, and it did bring untold misery on a great many people, but that was due to several matters beyond the ken of the people at the time who were concerned. Afghanistan was in turmoil, and with no apparent prospect of being anything but a coterie of quarrelling States . . . the country is bigger than France. . . . The State nearest the Punjab had a deadly quarrel with the Sikhs. Trade and peace were jeopardized. Here was the lawful heir, a very presentable, and apparently astute prince. His restoration would remove all the troubles. With a ragtag and bobtail contingent from India raised by himself and a few

Eurasian officers, he had beaten a large army of Baluchis at Shikarpur five years earlier, and an Afghan one at Kandahar. On the face of it, and Burnes' opinion in the matter was but one of many, Shah Shujah really was the man for the part.

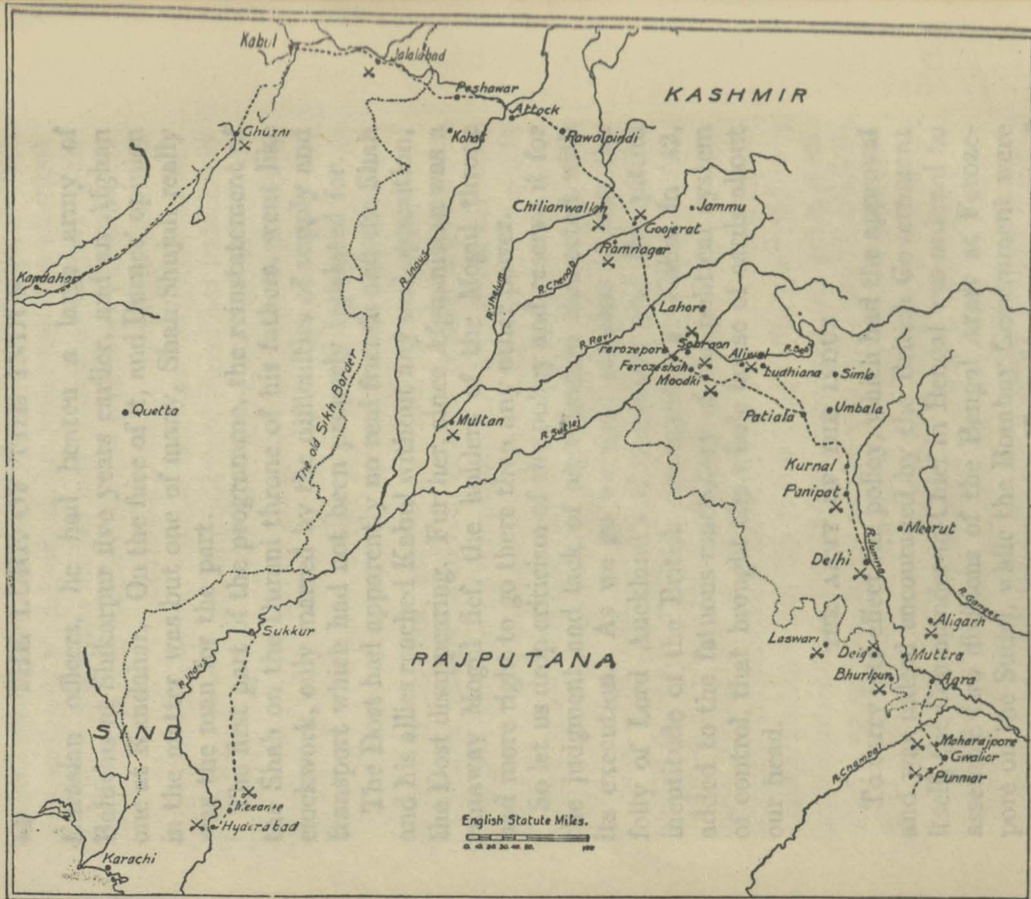
The first part of the programme, the reinstatement of the Shah on the Durani throne of his fathers, went like clockwork, only marred by the difficulties of supply and transport which had not been properly legislated for.

The Dost had apparently no real friends and the Shah and his allies reached Kabul without any real opposition, the Dost disappearing. Further, since Afghanistan was a runaway Mogul fief, the holders of the Mogul throne had more right to go there than any other power.

So let us drop criticism of the policy and reserve it for the judgment and lack of organization connected with its execution. As we go we shall see that it was the folly of Lord Auckland's Government and the pitiful ineptitude of the British commander at Kabul in '42, added to the fatuous machinery of the political system of control, that brought the whole house of cards about our head.

THE ARMY OF THE INDUS

To carry into effect the policy, which had the approval and was indeed encouraged by the British Government itself, the Commander-in-Chief in Bengal was ordered to assemble two divisions of the Bengal Army at Ferozepore on the Sutlej, while the Bombay Government were requested to put a division at Karachi on the coast of Sind. From far down the provinces the troops were set a-trudging for many hundred miles, with the prospect of many hundred miles more when once the operations began. To the gathering on the banks of the great river came the other partner in the venture, Runjhit



THE BATTLE-GROUND OF NORTHERN INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN

Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, now prematurely aged from many kinds of excesses but still in possession of his old acumen. He did not like the business, but saw that it would settle his Afghan frontier or else seriously injure his friends the British, either of which happenings would be pleasing to him.

Lord Auckland came too, and Shah Shujah, and it was generally one of those *tamashas*[1] for which India has so long been famous.

It would seem that in those days Army Headquarters was rarely consulted on the making of plans, but were expected to make a success of any ill-considered schemes of their masters. The logistics of this particular one seem to us appalling enough, in a land void of all rail. Yet to everyone save the wise Commander-in-Chief, they seemed but a bagatelle.

Any method of entering Afghanistan needed some thought, for since the British frontier lay on the Sutlej, with a cantonment at Ludhiana only, the Punjab and most of the five rivers, as well as the Indus, lay between the British and the Khaibar Pass, while the Sikh Army was a formidable force to have as an uncertain factor on a line of communications. Nor was Runjhit Singh anxious to see the northerly road the main line of communication.

From the British point of view, as a strategical operation, the forcing of the succession of passes and threading the tumbled mass of mountains between Peshawar and Kabul had no particular attraction, while an advance on Kandahar would bring the army into a far easier country, producing more supplies and having easier routes than the much shorter one by the Khaibar. It was, it is true, a long way off—from Ferozepore to the point of crossing at Sukkur was 446 miles, and thence on

[1] Spectacles.

to Kandahar alone 404 more—850 miles in all. From Kandahar to Kabul was another 325 miles. On the other hand, the move to Sukkur meant the presence of a river alongside for the whole route, so that water for transport and for drinking would produce no difficulty, while as the force proceeded it would be able to pick up more and more camels.

The original plans aimed at taking the two[1] Bengal divisions by this route, and sending the Shah's eldest son and the Shah's family, together with a British escort and a force of Sikhs, to Kabul by the Khaibar.

As this was the first campaign of the British Army of Queen Victoria's reign, and the first of a series which finally completed the British dominion from Cape Comorin to the Indus and ushered in the India of to-day, as well as laid the seeds of the Indian Mutiny, the army that assembled and its system are worthy of some notice. It was known by the stirring and suitable title of "The Army of the Indus."

It is first of all to be remembered as an interesting, futile, but romantic fact, that the army in India was clothed, at any rate in winter, as was the army in Europe, and the regular part of the Indian Army, both native cavalry and infantry, were dressed in the dress of the British line—in *chakoes*, coatees and white cross-belts. This was originally done that the appearance of the long red lines and red masses should impress their Indian foes, which no doubt it did. In this campaign as in all others, for instance, the Bengal Horse Artillery were in brass dragoon helmets with leopard-skin rolls and crimson crests, white buckskin breeches, and high jack-boots; and in this kit, too, was made that dramatic charge of the guns at the last barricade in the retreat from Kabul, when the last Horse Artillery gun was the

[1] Since it might be necessary to attack the Persians at Herat.

last rallying-point. Only the Irregular Horse were clothed in the style that is now universal in the Indian Army to-day.

But the army, magnificent to behold and splendid in fair fight, was by no means equipped and organized for the type of operation for which it was now designed—a campaign far away from all its bases of supply. The belief that the Almighty fed armies by means of ravens and cruses of oil was as prevalent in high circles then as it often is now, and the secret of maintenance was understood by very few.

The army in India was organized on the old Mogul principle which had obtained from time immemorial, and which worked when the Moguls moved up and down the length and breadth of Hindustan with huge escorts and retinues in peace, as well as when they marched armies in war. The Indian Army supplied itself from a huge moving city of shops which followed it a-pack-a-back. In Lord Lake's day only the outposts drew rations. The regimental merchants and agents fed the men in staples, shoes and equipments were mended in the bazaars, and every requirement, legitimate or otherwise, except fighting stores and equipments, could be bought from the hucksters and sutlers who followed the army.[1]

With the army or with the Moguls' encampments marched a huge and efficient staff of tent-pitchers —a race which endures to this day, and under whose guidance canvas cities rise in incredibly short time.

Everything other than the fighting troops and organized units was controlled by a bazaar-master. As soon as the Quartermaster-General's staff had indicated the encampments of the troops and of the bazaar, up

[1] The system remained practically unchanged till 1917.

went the bazaar-master's flag, and when that went up, the stream of followers and merchants knew exactly where their quarters lay. Within an hour up went the long streets and cross streets of the shops, each in the same relative position day in and day out. The last time this was perhaps seen in India in even a small way was at the great camp at Shinwari, below Dargai, in the Tirah campaign of 1897.

The huge numbers of followers who maintained these shops, pitched tents, and the like, made sanitation beyond the power of man to establish, so that when cholera came it swept the camps.

The merchants and *bunniahs* with the corps and in the bazaars had relatives in business, or business connection in every town in India, and these were anxious enough to supply the armies. Large fraternities of hereditary carriers who managed the grain trade of India were eager enough to carry the stuffs to the camps, and it was for their protection that so large a number of irregular cavalry regiments grew up in India in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Brinjaras, with their pack-bullocks, were the most notable of these carrying races, and their goodwill was the special care of Sir Arthur Wellesley in his campaigns in the Deccan, and indeed of any good commissariat officer and commander. Army transport as we know it now did not exist.

The mobile artillery of the army in India consisted chiefly of horse artillery. Horsed field batteries hardly existed at all, and the light field batteries drawn by bullocks were not especially prominent. Horse artillery guns which, when outclassed, as they often were, galloped in to closest range to get effective, or the heavier, slow-moving field guns, with elephant or bullock draft; were the artillery features. Pack artillery

was hardly known, though now and again it had been extemporized for campaigns in very wild terrain.[1]

THE ORDER OF BATTLE

The army was originally to have been commanded by General Sir Harry Fane himself, the Commander-in-Chief in Bengal and of the Queen's troops in India, a distinguished soldier to whom all the army looked with confidence, and with him were two Bengal Divisions under Generals Cotton and Duncan respectively. But while the British force was sharing in the parades with the Sikh forces at Ferozepore, came the news that the Persians had abandoned the siege of Herat, and thereby one of the important reasons for moving an army into Afghanistan disappeared. It was decided, therefore, to reduce the army by one division, and that then Sir Harry Fane should not go in command. General Cotton was to go with the Bengal Division, while General Sir John Keane,[2] who was bringing up a Bombay Division, would command the army.

But it must be remembered that we were not going to make war on Afghanistan. We were accompanying a sovereign who, with an army of his own and many supporters, was returning to claim the throne of his fathers. We did not enter the country as an enemy but as a friend. Therefore the principal personage was the representative of the Governor-General at the Court of Shah Shujah, no less a person than Mr. Macnaghten himself, who, unless actual hostilities were in progress, was not unnaturally supreme.

The infantry brigades, as was then the custom,

[1] The Bombay Artillery furnished a mountain train for service in Khandesh.

[2] Commander-in-Chief in Bombay.

consisted of three battalions, usually one European to two native, and the cavalry in the same combination.

The reduced force, under Sir Willoughby Cotton, consisted of one cavalry and three infantry brigades, and that under Sir John Keane, coming up from Bombay via Karachi, two of infantry and one of cavalry. The 2nd Bengal Division was left behind at Ferozepore, where a cantonment was to be established. The force was now constituted as follows :

1*st Bengal Division.*	Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton.
1*st Brigade.*	13th Foot.
Brigadier Sale.	16th Bengal Native Infantry.
	48th ,, ,,
2*nd Brigade.*	31st Bengal Native Infantry.
Brigadier Nott.	42nd ,, ,,
	43rd ,, ,,
3*rd Brigade.*	3rd Buffs.
Brigadier Dennie.	2nd Bengal Native Infantry.
	27th ,, ,,
Cavalry Brigade.	16th Lancers.
Brigadier Thackwell.	2nd Bengal Light Cavalry.
	3rd ,, ,,
Bombay Division.	Lieutenant-General Sir John Keane.
1*st Brigade.*	2nd Queen's.
Brigadier Wiltshire.	17th Foot.
	19th Bombay Native Infantry.
2*nd Brigade.*	1st Bombay Native Infantry.
Brigadier Gordon.	2nd ,, ,,
	5th ,, ,,
Cavalry Brigade.	14th Light Dragoons (2 Squadrons).
Brigadier Scott.	1st Bombay Light Cavalry.
	Poona Auxiliary Horse.

THE SHAH'S CONTINGENT

Among the most interesting side-stories to the history of this period is that of the Shah's contingent, of which the whole story has yet to be written. It has been related how Shah Shujah, in his attempt to recover his throne in 1854, had been permitted to raise a force at his own expense in Ludhiana. This contingent contained, among other adventurers, some two battalions of Hindustanis, that is to say, men of Oudh, the hereditary foot-soldiers of Hindustan from time immemorial. No doubt many of them had served in the Company's army. It has also been related how these battalions, under a Eurasian officer, had been the *pièce de résistance* in the battles at Shikarpur and Kandahar. It was therefore to be expected that a properly organized force of six thousand men, with British officers and N.O.'s, and N.C.O.'s, specially selected and promoted from the regular army, would become a valuable force.

It consisted in the first instance of—

6 battalions,
2 cavalry regiments (irregular),
1 troop of horse artillery,
1 mountain train,
1 company sapper and miner.

The force was clothed and equipped on the Company's model, and the commander was Brigadier Simpson from the 19th Bengal Infantry.

The contingent had to start long before its training was complete, and it was largely increased from local levies later. In its first composition were Hindustanis and Pathans and Moslems from the Punjab, as also a battalion of Gurkhas; for the men of Nepal were always to be found in Northern India seeking military service

from the Sikh as well as the British Government. Its doings will be recorded in the course of the narrative, but it is interesting to note that Brigadier Roberts,[1] the father of the Field-Marshal, commanded the contingent later at Kabul for a while.

It disappeared with the disasters that overwhelmed the Shah with the exception of the 3rd Shah's Infantry, which so distinguished itself in defending Kelat-i-Ghilzai[2] and accompanying General Nott to the end, that it was absorbed into the India Army as the Kelat-i-Ghilzai Regiment. It also survived the Mutiny and became the 12th Bengal Infantry, remaining till 1932 as the 2/2nd Bombay Pioneers (Kelat-i-Ghilzie).

Lord Auckland had thought that the contingent itself would suffice, but Burnes, with his recent knowledge, urged that the British force should go to Kabul.

SIND AND BALUCHISTAN

The position of Sind *vis-à-vis* the Durani Empire and the British has already been alluded to, and the fact that it was for centuries a part of the Mogul Empire, then of the dominion of Nadir Shah as wrested from the Moguls, and eventually fell to Ahmad Shah Durani when he established his empire. It had only been released therefrom when that empire crumpled of its own weight, and dominion over Sind was held by certain Amirs or Baluch chiefs who rode at their ease amid a peaceable population whom they oppressed terribly, maintaining their position by a large retinue of men-at-arms drawn from the Baluch of the hills or from the military and predatory class of Central Asia. If pressed, they must either yield to the ruler of Afghanistan or to

[1] Afterwards General Sir Abraham Roberts, G.C.B.
[2] This is the spelling of the period and the Army List.

the British, to whom the rule of India had fallen. They had not the slightest claim to any other position, and the cruelty and ruthlessness of their rule did, in fact, entitle them to little regard on any count. It has been related how Shah Shujah in 1818 and in 1834 had claimed their allegiance, and had actually discussed with them terms under which he would abrogate their obligations to him. The Tripartite Treaty freed them from any allegiance to the Shah.

As part and parcel of the trade policy of the British, but more especially of their Afghan policy, the status of Sind needed a definite solution. The British have been much criticised, however, by the Victorians, but without any good reason, for their treatment of Sind. In effect, the British demanded a passage for certain of their troops up the Indus and certain of their troops down the Indus. They also demanded the cession for the time being of the ancient fortress of Bukkur, on an island in the Indus, where the river cut its way through conglomerate beds. That fortress was one of the great places of the world, and the Amirs of Sind had but a fortuitous lien on it. The British made these demands on behalf of the claimant to the Durani throne, with whom they were in alliance, or failing that, as the rulers of the empire to which from time immemorial Sind belonged. If the Amirs accepted these demands in good part they would be the better for it pecuniarily, and if they would carry out their duties as rulers of the land with any sense of humanity and responsibility, they would have the support and protection of the British. Such in broad terms was the position, and it was eventually accepted in fairly good part. Consideration for princes in their position had always been a strong point in British policy, and the events which led up to the British annexation of Sind, to be related hereafter, really were due to the impossibility of the Amirs

fitting into any scheme of semi-civilization and progress. To this may be added their failure to realize that their position on the lower waters of the Indus did not give them the right to ride rough-shod over all who would use its waterway.

When the Bombay column was on its way up, the Amirs of Hyderabad made to oppose it. The Bengal column was then at Bukkur. Sir Harry Fane was about to leave it and proceed to Karachi, but finding his progress down, and Sir John Keane's up, opposed, he led the Bengal column down to settle the matter. The Amirs gave way, the Bengal troops returned to Bukkur, Sir John Keane came up, and the campaign went forward.

Baluchistan, the wide mountain tract about the Bolan Pass which ran north along the Sulaiman mountains and south towards the coast, contained numerous Baluch clans controlled by chiefs whose authority they readily recognized. The supreme chief of the Baluch tribes, which formed a loose confederation, was the Khan of Kelat. He, and his predecessors too, from time immemorial had recognized the Mogul and then the Durani overlordship, but during the decay of the Durani Shahs, had achieved some sort of independence.

It was the British purpose to obtain his assent to the progress of Shah Shujah and his allies and also to see that he acknowledged once again the Durani supremacy . . . an idea, however, peculiarly abhorrent to him.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE INDUS TO KANDAHAR AND KABUL

THE MARCH TO KANDAHAR

THE Bengal portion of the Army of the Indus, 9,500 strong, and the Shah's contingent, 6,000 strong, left Ferozepore early in November and marched down the left bank of the river Sutlej, through the territories of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, the Shah's contingent leading. Supplies were readily produced by the Nawab, and the march to Sukkur-Bukkur was uneventful, though in Sind supplies were not so readily forthcoming.

The Bengal Engineers constructed a magnificent bridge of boats over the Indus on both sides of the island, on which stood the fortress of Bukkur, now reluctantly handed over by the Amirs. The army crossed with enthusiasm, its trains taking several days in the process, which was not complete till 18th February. The Hindustani sepoys showed no sign of fear or reluctance to cross, despite certain expectations, mindful perhaps of the days when the Hindu kingdoms stretched to Kabul. The Bombay troops followed in rear, and the Shah himself crossed the Indus by way of Shikarpur.

Now it was that the troubles began to fall heavily on the army. The staff work dropped lamentably below standard, for, in spite of the long wait at Sukkur, no plans for crossing the waterless plains of Kach Gandava had been made, and it was with great weakening and loss

to the cattle and horses, and much irritation from the raids of the hill Baluchis, that the force was concentrated at Quetta early in April, further hampered by the failure of local supplies.

The Mogul system of transport and supplies had failed. The army was beyond the reach of the Indian system of related merchants eager to sell supplies, beyond the help of the carrier tribes and classes. The commissariat, ill-experienced in what was a very technical matter, tried with poor success to raise Government camel corps.

While waiting at Quetta, no attempts were made to reconnoitre the road over the Kwaja Amran range, and with the troops on half and followers on a quarter-ration, the army struggled somewhat pitifully down into the lower and warmer plains of Kandahar after one small skirmishing with bodies of Durani horse, but still much irritated by the continued raids of the tribes, which they had not yet learned how to tackle.

However, by 24th April (1839), the Shah, ahead of his contingent, arrived at Kandahar unopposed and unwelcomed, and a couple of days behind him, the driving weight of the two British divisions.

GHUZNI AND KABUL

The joint Amirs of Kandahar, Kuhn Dil Khan and his brother, with their troops, made off for Girishk on the road to Herat. The British Army, badly soldiered through the passes, was in need of considerable rest. Troops, followers, and animals needed a period on full rations, and this they now got, so that the force soon recovered its verve and spirits, though somewhat the worse for the lavish fruit harvest. It was some time before Brigadier Sale could march out to Girishk, where a battalion of the Shah's contingent was installed, the





CELEBRITIES OF THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR, 1839–1842

MUHAMMAD AKBAR
Son of Shah Shujah

and his victim

SIR WILLIAM MACNAGHTEN
The Envoy.

Amirs having fled towards Seistan. The Envoy, said to be hugging himself with the delusion that the Shah's reception had been enthusiastic, prophesied that the march to Kabul would be unopposed. The army had not organized its own intelligence staff, and was dependent on the political officers for information, of whose acumen a very low opinion was soon formed. In fact, the army was sadly defective for its purpose. It had an immense train baggage; and a young officer of the 16th Lancers, writing in his diary, records that a hurricane had swept the camp, but that luckily his tent was a small one, and his seventeen (!) retainers had managed to hold it up. These would be *saises*, grass-cutters, tent-pitchers, and the like, as well as one or two personal servants. No wonder that the force stripped the country like a swarm of locusts! But that was India at its worst period of fighting efficiency.

By the 27th June, however, General Keane was ready to go on, and, resisting the urgings of the Envoy, decided to take most of his force with him. On 21st July the force reached Ghuzni without opposition *en route*, save for the ruthless slaughter of straggling followers. But it was now found that the ancient fortress was strongly held. Unfortunately, the weakness of the cattle had compelled the General to leave his heavy guns in Kandahar, and he had no metal that could hope to touch those massive walls. Ghuzni was held for the Dost nominally, with one of his sons, Haidar Khan, in command. In reality it was held by the pride of the Ghilzais, who did not easily brook strangers a-promenading in their lands. While the city was invested, the Ghilzais outside fell on that portion of the leaguer which held the Shah's contingent. T' actual attack was to be made on the northern face, and the Kabul gate was carried after being blown in by Captain Pe. and Lieutenant

Durand of the Bengal Engineers. Fierce fighting with Afghan swordsmen occurred inside the gateway, and it was only after much severe hand-to-hand fighting that the place fell, the citadel itself, however, being found undefended. Of a garrison of from 4,000 to 5,000, 1,600 were captured and some 500 killed, and a large quantity of supplies, with many animals and war material of sorts, fell into British hands. The British loss was about 200. Leaving a garrison in Ghuzni with the sick and wounded, the British marched on for Kabul, having performed a very notable feat of arms, so far as the actual storming was concerned.

When news of the fall of Ghuzni reached the Dost he summoned his Sirdars, and then sent his brother, the Nawab Jabbar Khan, known to the British as the "good Nawab," to ask what terms they had to offer him. The answer was better than that which Harold the King sent to Harold Hardrada before Stamford Brig, of six feet of English soil, but it was hardly less palatable: "An honourable asylum in India!"

When Jabbar Khan returned, Dost Muhammad concentrated his army, and found himself with 13,000 men and 30 guns, and with this he marched out to Argandeh on the Ghuzni road and set out his array, but knowing in his heart of hearts that no one was prepared to go into the last ditch on his behalf. There was, in fact, neither fight nor loyal following in those with him, and it is this fact that is the best argument in favour of Lord Auckland's policy, viz., that Afghanistan and the Afghans were not in any way wrapped up in the Dost, that his virtues merely lay in the fact that he had been able to carry on at Kabul, and that had Shah Shujah's affairs been properly managed, he and his line might have made good. How and why they failed we shall see. Apparently kings and amirs at best are things the Afghans



CELEBRITIES OF THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR, 1839–1842

Sir Alexander Burnes
Murdered at Kabul.

Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk

Lady Sale
Captive with the Afghans.

detest, and they are no more set on one than on another, as indeed we may see in these last few years of our Lord when Amanullah fled, lucky to be left with his eyesight.

The Dost, it is related, rode among his troops, Qoran in hand, and urged them in the name of God and his Prophet to fight for him and liberty. "Support the brother of Fath Khan in one last charge against the foreign dogs, and if that fails then go to Shah Shujah!" And not a soul responded. The American soldier of fortune, Harlan, who had been in the service of Runjhit Singh and who was in Kabul, related that his guards forsook the Dost and that the rabble plundered his pavilion, even took his bedding from under him, seized his prayer-carpet and hacked his tent to pieces. If that be true, well may the Persian proverb be repeated: "*Afghán! Afghán! Be Imán! Be Imán!*" But the story rather upsets the idea of the king enshrined in his subjects' hearts, whom the British had replaced so unnecessarily.

So without an army and without a crown the Dost ran forth from Kabul, by way of Bamian, his son, Akbar Khan, covering his retreat with a few horsemen. It was Outram who, with a special party of officers, rode fruitlessly in pursuit, and with them the arch-turncoat of evil reputation, one Haji Khan Khakar, who had been the first to join the Shah and had not enhanced the latter's cause thereby.

THE SHAH ON THE THRONE OF HIS FATHERS

On 6th August, Sir John Keane camped close to Kabul, having found abandoned at Argandeh the somewhat pitiful array of all the Dost's guns.

On 7th August, Shah Shujah-ul-Mulk rode into Kabul

at the head of a great *cortège*, looking, it must be said, with his flowing beard, kingly enough, and by his side the Envoy and "Sikunder"[1] Burnes. Bayonets gleamed and cannon roared, and the sight in the ancient city with its ring of hill was splendid and inspiring. It has been said that the Kabulis received him glumly; but the Eastern crowds do not shout, and you might have heard a pin drop when, in 1911, His Majesty drove through Delhi.[2] To him who would raise his voice on such an occasion the bastinado would be the customary reward. So the silent entry of Shah Shujah was not necessarily of evil portent.

It has been said that the Shah, who had been away from the Bala Hissar for thirty years, ran eagerly round its remembered courts, struck with the manner in which it had been neglected.

And thus the King came by his own again, and for the moment all seemed well. An Afghan order was founded, that of the "Douranie[3] Empire," and His Majesty held an investiture, Grand Crosses and Knight-Commandership going to the great ones, and lesser stars to the lesser folk, and everyone was mightily pleased, though those who were not recipients jeered heartily after the manner of the English. But indeed it was a fitting occasion, for the moment at least, to rejoice. Macnaghten was made a baronet, and Sir John Keane became Lord Keane of Ghuzni, while a medal[4] was to be issued by the Shah for the storming of that fortress.

But though the Shah was now on his throne, it was pretty obvious to all that he had not been restored by his own subjects and inherents, as the Simla Manifesto

[1] Sikunder=fortunate, the equivalent of Alexander.
[2] A point that caused comment among the unthinking.
[3] The spelling of the day.
[4] It was not ready till after the Shah's murder, and was eventually issued by the E.I. Company.

indicated, but by British weapons and bayonets. Even though Sir William Macnaghten might report that the Shah had been received " with feelings nearly amounting to adoration," it was not possible to suggest that he could remain supported by his own contingent alone. Certain reductions of the Army took place, but a strong British force remained. The chiefs of the country-side had not flocked to the Shah's Court, governors of prestige and devotion had not been forthcoming for the provinces, and therefore it seemed that the British must proceed to organize the government, which apparently the Shah himself was not in a position to do. And it is here that all the trouble began, and was bound to begin. Something was wrong in the whole make-up.

FRIENDLY RELATIONS AT KABUL

It is, however, to be remembered, and happily remembered that the British came into Afghanistan in 1839, with no hostile intent and with no expectations of war. In fact, the description of the earlier phases of this period as the First Afghan " War " is sadly misleading—sadly, because it slipped into a war by ill-chance and ill-management.

When Dost Muhammad, abandoned by his supporters, left that pitiful row of guns, drawn up empty and unmanned, to oppose our advance on Kabul, no one was sufficiently enamoured of the Amir to die in the last ditch for him, and that city was occupied without hostility. Markets were opened, and the force encamped itself at ease as it would in friendly India. There were no outrages. Officers rode at will about the country with but an orderly. Young John Nicholson records how he and a friend rode in unescorted from Ghuzni to Kabul to attend the races. Afghans joined in the sports, and

officers visited the gentry in their country houses for shooting and hawking.

Here is a description written at the time:

"Throughout the whole of the autumn (1839), the officers passed to and fro with a confidence which at this early stage of their acquaintance appeared to command a like degree of honesty among the people. . . . Parties rode hither and thither to visit and inspect such objects of curiosity as were described to them. . . . Horse-racing and cricket were both got up in the vicinity of Kabul, and in both the chiefs and people soon learned to take a lively interest. Shah Shujah gave a valuable sword to be run for. . . . Several of the native gentry entered their horses . . . being great gamblers in their way. They looked on with astonishment at the bowling, batting, and fagging of the English players. . . . Our countrymen attended them to their mains of cocks and quails and other fighting animals, betting freely, and lost or won their rupees in the best possible humour. In like manner our people indulged them from time to time in trials of strength and feats of agility, on which they much pride themselves, and, much to the astonishment of their new friends, threw the most noted of Kabul wrestlers.

"The result of this frankness was to create among the Afghans a good deal of personal liking for their conquerors (this is a wrong phrase). The chiefs, in consequence, invited them to their houses in town as well as to share in their field sports in their castles in the country."

The same writer records the amazement with which the Afghans saw the officers on skates which the regimental artificers fashioned, and cried, "Now we see that you

really are men born in the North and used to vigour of body and mind."

The Afghan chiefs and sirdars freely dined, not only with the British heads, but also in the regimental messes, H.M. 13th Foot being especially forward in their hospitality.

Unfortunately, as we know, the attractive young Englishmen became too great favourites with the ladies of Kabul, and much jealousy and ill-will was finally engendered—a story of which a good deal might be written by itself.

But the long and short of it was, that the Army of Occupation, in supporting the Afghan King against his enemies, was for a while received with goodwill and hospitality. The tragedy lies, in the unfolding of the long series of events, events which should have been foreseen from the first, which made the situation impossible.

THE BREAK-UP OF THE ARMY OF THE INDUS

The financial strain on the Government of India was, of course, considerable, and while the necessity of a military occupation, at any rate till the next year, was accepted, it was important to reduce the force by all unnecessary constituents. So in September the Bombay troops under General Wiltshire started back to their own provinces via the Khaibar with most of the cavalry and horse artillery. General Sir Willoughby Cotton remained in command of the force at Kabul and its

neighbourhood, while at Kandahar General Nott commanded a separate force. The distribution of the garrison was as follows, and it cannot be said that it was a large one for the purpose.

Between Kabul and Jalalabad :

3rd Buffs.
13th Foot.
35th Bengal N.I.
48th Bengal N.I.
2nd ,, ,,
27th ,, ,,
2nd Bengal Lt. Cavalry.

At Ghuzni :

16th Bengal N.I.

At Kandahar :

42nd Bengal N.I.
43rd ,, ,,
Skinner's Horse (with a squadron at Ghuzni).

Total.—Two British and seven native battalions with two regiments of native cavalry, in addition to the Shah's contingent.

There were during the autumn some sharp hostilities on the far side of the hills at Bamian, where want of information got a force into some difficulties ; but for the most part the country sat down to watch what manner of man the old king might be. And he, with the Envoy, spent the winter at Jalalabad, while two European battalions left at Kabul got through the winter in the Bala Hissar, the historical fortress on the hills near the city, with considerable success.

In any case the country is too snow-ridden for much to be done till the spring, and the hibernating Afghans had been able to think a bit harder as to their lot and their future ; and in the meantime their relations with their visitors, as distinct from their visitors' policy, were excellent.

THE ENVOY AND THE POLITICAL SERVICE

From this period there dates that pronounced hostility towards and dislike of the "Political" Service (which was so marked a feature at this time) which lasted over the Second Afghan War and the early frontier wars, and still rears its head whenever the "political officer" endeavours to exceed his role. The term "political" in India is used to denote what we should call the Diplomatic Service elsewhere. Nearly all our wars and campaigns in India have been against an internal foe whom we want to coerce without bloodshed, or against the recalcitrances of people on our border whom we are endeavouring to bring to lead a life of order.

The people who deal ordinarily with the native princes of India, and who carry on negotiations with semi-independent tribes and chiefs, are officers of the "Political" Service, a service recruited both from the Civil Service and from the Army.

Because, as has been explained, the avoidance of war, rather than the discomfiture of foes, is so often the prime object of our operations, political officers accompany the force, and it has usually been their duty to say when the ways of peace have failed, and to loose the dogs of war. They must therefore of necessity have a somewhat prominent position with the force they accompany. But as they are often drawn from the junior ranks of the army by chance, or by family influence rather than by ability, their position does not make them popular. The expedition to Afghanistan demanded that the Envoy should be the most important person therewith. He it was who represented the authority of Great Britain and all the ramifications of policy that the circumstances involved. For this he

needed a considerable staff of assistants, which naturally grew. But the recognized Political Service of India could not spare many men, and the Envoy's staff was largely drawn from the young officers of the army, often selected for the inadequate reasons just described, and so these young gentlemen left their corps to find themselves in places of authority, importance and emolument. Their position up to a certain limit was essential. The army was not concerned with affairs. The Shah was our ally, his people our very good friends. The young politicals, who were soon sent out to the various districts, were representatives of the Envoy, helping the Shah's officials to get control of the country. So far so good. But very soon, by some extraordinary fatuity and incapacity, we see the army authorities abandoning all control of their own affairs. The Envoy decided what operations were necessary and detailed the troops, instead of being in close touch with the army commander and asking him, after due consultation, to undertake the necessary operations with the force and in the manner he thought necessary. The young politicals took out forces commanded by much senior officers and often took command, their ignorance and undue insistence at times being responsible for the military failures that occurred.[1]

As our position got more and more involved, so did this arrangement become more and more anomalous and dangerous, until, added to the want of personality and character of the senior soldiers when the crisis came, it

[1] We had much the same position in Mesopotamia, where the growing needs of administration of occupied territory demanded an increasing political service, but excellent young men were found in the army, and they were admirably controlled. The memory of Afghanistan had long caused the Commander-in-Chief of such expeditions to be also the Government representative, and the chief political officer one of his heads of departments. But the same symptoms in a less harmful degree could be discerned.

was practically responsible for all the military failures, and probably the cause even of the civil collapse, since without military disaster civil prestige could have remained.

Happily, in modern times such a position is not allowed to arise.

THE AFFAIRS OF 1840

In the spring of the second year things were quiet enough. The disturbing rumours of the autumn had died away. The Russian approach to Khiva, which had induced the Envoy to propose sending a force to Bukhara to dig out the refugee Dost and oppose the Russians, had been refused countenance by Sir John Keane, and the menace had wilted away as the Russians perished on the winter road to Khiva. So the Shah and the Envoy returned to Kabul as

> "The Spring-time flushed the desert grass
> And the kafilas file down the Khaiber Pass."

The Ghilzais about Ghuzni were also in insurrection, and once again Nott had to put things right, occupying Kalat-i-Ghilzai in some hope of steadying the countryside.

On the long line of communications between Kandahar and the Indus, too, trouble had arisen. In November 1839 General Wiltshire had stormed Kelat with some brilliance on his return road to India, the unfortunate Khan, who had refused to surrender, being killed in the defence. His successor, however, in the spring of 1840 had attacked Quetta, and all the Baluch tribes were giving trouble necessitating some vigorous action at the hands of General Nott. In and round Kandahar itself Prince Timur, the heir-apparent, had not been successful in gaining the goodwill of the chiefs, and British

troops found themselves engaged in several encounters, in which, however, the Sepoy regiments usually gave a good account of themselves. Nevertheless, the essential goodwill and devotion to the Shah was conspicuous enough by its absence. In the spring, too, the Dost had escaped from Bokhara and returned to Khulm, and from thence advanced with a large Usbeg force towards Bamian. Brigadier Dennie of the 13th Foot took out a considerable force and dealt faithfully enough with them; but now came rumours of the tribes in the Kabul Kohistan being up in the Dost's favour. In November Brigadier Sale led a force against them also. Here he found that the Dost was present in person, and that he had run into a hornets' nest that was rather more than he could smoke out. Matters were complicated by the notorious action of Parwandarra, where the 2nd Bengal Light Cavalry, ordered to charge as part of a successful action, failed to follow their officers, leaving them to gallop alone among a mass of Afghan swordsmen. The operations were vexatious, the tribes ubiquitous, and Burnes, who had accompanied Sale, went so far as to advise the Envoy to recall the force and order the immediate concentration of all the troops. Then, however, an unexpected stroke of fortune befell. Sir William Macnaghten, riding outside Kabul, was approached by a solitary horseman, and was told, to his astonishment, that it was the Dost come to surrender. And so it was. Weary, apparently, of his wandering life, sick at heart at the fickleness of the tribesmen, who fought for their own hand rather than his, he had thrown up the sponge.

In doing so he had struck a note that at once echoed in British hearts, especially since public sympathy was with him rather than with the ineffective Shah. Treated as an honoured visitor, he was escorted to India by Sir

Willoughby Cotton, who was giving up the command, and went into an honourable exile as the guest of Britain.

And now indeed there seemed no obstacle to the success of British policy, and all Sir William Macnaghten's fears vanished. Everything was *couleur de rose* in that upland garden. 1840 closed in peace and harmony, and the Shah and Envoy repaired once more to the lower levels of Jalalabad for the Afghan winter.

One irreparable mischief had the Envoy done. He had insisted, against military advice, in withdrawing the garrison from the commanding security of the Bala Hissar and erecting an ordinary cantonment in the open, outside Kabul, amid the fortified residences of the nobles, vineyards and ancient tombs. It was just such a cantonment as had been built outside Delhi or Hyderabad in the Deccan. And the British set themselves to live exactly the same carefree life, as if they had been in British India, holding the Afghans, as a military proposition, in supreme contempt. The Envoy sent for Lady Macnaghten, installed her in a bungalow of Indian type, from which she dispensed the hospitalities of a *burra mem.*[1] To India the officers were encouraged to send for their families, Lady Sale among them, and also some of the families of the soldiers of the British units. And all the while the Punjab was not even British, the Khaiberrees were giving trouble, and there was not a mile of railway in the whole of India!

In addition to this, the old Lion of the Punjab was dead at Lahore these twelve months gone, and all was turmoil and anarchy in his capital. Nevertheless, the British force in Kabul proceeded to give every hostage to fortune that the occasion was capable of admitting.

[1] An important lady.

THE CRUMBLING OF THE EDIFICE

1839 we have seen pass into 1840 with some show of peace, and 1840, after a disturbed year, had waned in good omens into 1841, the year of trial. It is generally admitted that Sir William Macnaghten, one of those extremely able public servants, which, among many types, the Indian services produce, was entirely unsuited for the rôle for which he had been selected. He was a secretariat man pure and simple, and in service jargon had "never held the baby," had never been called on to handle men and affairs on the spot, however ably he might control and dictate from his seat in the secretariat. He had never seen men face to face, and he had no experience of the handling of Orientals; had neither the sympathy with the chiefs of old lineage and fierce record as had Henry Lawrence, nor had the knowledge of the astute, intriguing Eastern mind which men such as Malcolm and Elphinstone had developed, or in latter days such men as David Barr and Harold Deane, men who combined knowledge with their sympathy.

In his desire to give the Shah a legitimately free hand he had allowed him to do the most dangerous of all things—surround himself with *émigrés* who had returned with him. His vizier or chief minister was his old friend the Mullah Shikore, of whom it has been said that "He had lost both his memory and his ears, but had sufficient faculty left to hate the English, to oppress the people, to be corrupt and venal beyond all conception, and to appoint subordinates as flagitious as himself." "Bad ministers," wrote Burnes, "are in every Government solid ground for unpopularity, and I doubt if king had ever worse set than Shah Shujah."

When British officials brought complaints to notice,

those who brought the complaints were punished by the Shah. At Kandahar Prince Timur had surrounded himself with venal and incompetent *émigrés* also. In Eastern lands, when revenue collectors and officials are too oppressive, rebellions take place. Here in Afghanistan, under this unhealthy diarchy, rebellions, the natural outlet of the oppressed, were suppressed by British bayonets at the call of the politicals. And so at last everything connected with the British was tainted with the evil of the Shah's myrmidons. That it should have been so was a tragedy and a folly, for on the balance of evidence it would seem that the Shah, better served by his officials, might well have made good.

Then it must be remembered that our presence prevented the Shah preserving himself by Oriental methods. Had he been alone he would doubtless have removed by the axe, the cannon's mouth, and the rope, all those who stood in his way, but typical Afghan measures of authority of this nature were forbidden him.

Then when local chiefs had stood aside, the Envoy devised a policy which, while sound enough under other conditions, deeply stirred the chiefs. Since it would not rally to its king, the Envoy decided that the country must be governed by means of royal troops and royal armed levies. All over the country extra forces were raised to keep it in order, who, paid by the Shah, would, it was hoped, be loyal to him. It was a policy which would have held good in British India, where a newly acquired province of unruly folk had been occupied and where a military force was engaged in disarming the people and turning sword into ploughshare. It might have been an admirable policy had Afghanistan been a less warlike and lawless, and a more accessible country. As it was, the *janbaz*[1] and local horse, but more and

[1] Militia. Lit., life-savers, i.e. "guards."

more exasperated those whom they were supposed to cow.

Earlier in 1841 there had been more risings, both of Ghilzais and Duranis, though these were dealt with successfully enough by General Nott; and the fatuous Macnaghten wrote to a correspondent: "From Mookoor to the Khaibar Pass all is content and tranquillity, and wherever we Europeans go we are received with attention, respect, and welcome. I think our prospects are most cheering. . . . The people are perfect children, and they should be treated as such."

Old General Nott, with whom was the able "political" Major Rawlinson, who he kept in great order, took by no means the same view. He wrote with more than a fair share perhaps of contempt for the system, but this is what he said:

"The conduct of the thousand and one politicals has ruined our cause, and bared the throat of every European in this country to the sword and knife of the revengeful Afghan and the Bloody Balooch. . . . Shah Shoojah is certainly the greatest scoundrel as ever lives."

But as late as September, 1841, the Envoy was all-cheerfulness. He had just been appointed Governor of Bombay, and Burnes was shortly to take over from him. Nevertheless, the dying year was destined to be more than stormy, and the first trouble was engendered by the not unnatural policy of the British Government, who were now feeling acutely the strain of the expenditure in Afghanistan, which still remained at a high figure. The Envoy received peremptory orders that the allowances to the tribal chiefs must be reduced. This immediately resulted in the Ghilzais closing the passes between Kabul and Jalalabad. At the same time, Akbar Khan, the Dost's son, was now in Khulm stirring up strife, and the indignant chiefs were well enough inclined to listen.

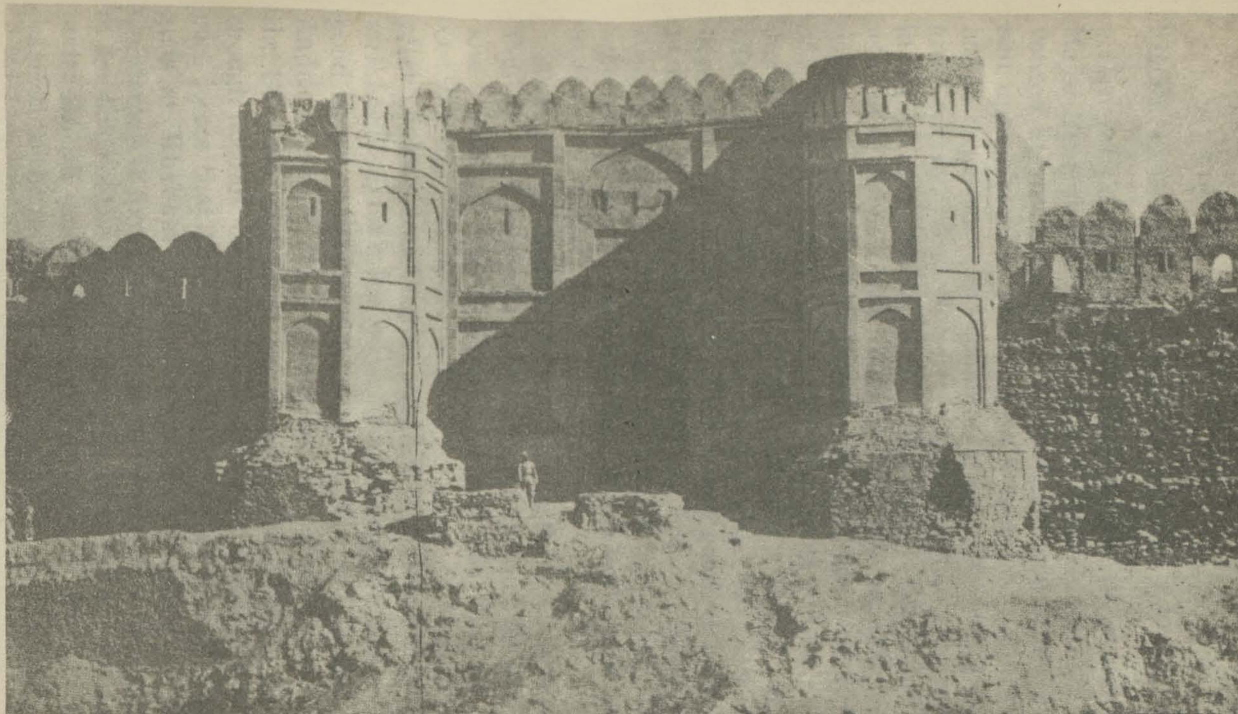


Photo by the Bengal Sappers in 1879

THE BALA HISSAR OF KABUL

General Cotton had been succeeded in command by Major-General Elphinstone of the British Service, advanced in years, a martyr to gout, and quite unwilling and unfit himself, to proceed to a country of which he had no experience, and command a force likely to require great energy. A further misfortune was that the troops in Kabul were due for relief. The 13th Light Infantry, who were *au fait* with every inch of the country, and whose relationship with their comrades, black and white, of the Indian Army had always been most cordial, were due for Europe. The experienced 35th and 37th, with efficient commandants, were also to go. The 13th had been relieved by the 44th Foot, whose conduct in India had been entirely opposite, and had been marked by a disinclination to fraternize with the Indian Army, and who were disliked in consequence, which bore its ill fruit in time of danger.

As General Sale and his brigade were to go down to the Punjab, it was a good opportunity for opening the passes and chastising the Ghilzais, and towards the end of October the brigade started. It got down to Gandamak after prolonged and severe fighting, in which it was not well handled, for it lost a good deal of baggage and had a good many casualties, including the General wounded. And it certainly did not, save on one occasion, chastise the Ghilzais, though in actual fighting it made a good enough account of itself. So heavy had been the transport losses that Sale had to leave the 35th with some guns at Khabbar Jabbar in dangerous isolation. At Gandamak it found a regiment of horse and a battalion of *jezailchis* of the Shah's contingent in their cantonment under British officers, but a day or so later the former deserted to the rebels.

CHAPTER III

THE BURSTING OF THE STORM AND AFTER

The Murders at Kabul
Jalalabad and Ghuzni
Kandahar
The Avenging Armies
The Finale at Kabul
The Return to India
The Commander-in-Chief's Comments
The Dost back in Kabul

THE MURDERS AT KABUL

THE brewing trouble at Kabul which had made the Envoy send a recall to Sale now suddenly flared up; but from the entries in Lady Sale's diary (a singularly direct and uncompromising compilation) there was nothing but calm up to the end of October, and her entries refer to her great regret at leaving her snug Kabul bungalow and her flower and kitchen gardens both much admired by her Afghan sisters.

On the 2nd November, the storm broke. Without warning, a truculent crowd surrounded Burnes' house, and in a very short time he and those with him were hacked to pieces, and his small guard, which also guarded the treasury, massacred. But paralysis seized those in authority.

The futility of the Envoy was now displayed and corps after corps of the Shah contingent was left or sent to be massacred in the country round. That alone did not improve the moral of this strong brigade at Kabul with its pitiful top layer of nonentities. The destruction of the Shah's Gurkhas at Charikar alone was a tragedy that should always be mourned, lest some Macnaghten do it again.

Little that was effective was done by the British. Brigadier Shelton of the 44th marched to the Bala



Hissar with a portion of the force, and the Shah sent one of his own levy corps under Campbell[1] to see what could be done. It made a reckless attempt to get into the city and was driven back. Shelton did nothing except cover Campbell's retreat. The 35th, left by Sale in the passes, were at once ordered back, and came through in fine soldierly style. But a blight and a curse seemed to have fallen on the military authorities, who could but quarrel, disagree, and convene that weird conception, which seems to have grown up under the strange situation, viz., Councils of War. Never before did a British commander need a Council of War to help him command; but we see the exotic growing freely in Afghanistan.

The futility of Lord Auckland's policy and the Envoy's methods added to the gross incapacity of General Elphinstone to grip any crisis, control his staff, or stand up to the Envoy, hurried matters from bad to worse. How easy it is to paralyse brave men when the leading is wrong is too often noticeable. As Lord Auckland's men of action were paralysed, so do we see an incredible paralysis, in the same part of the world in 1830, when a blight was thrown over the administration. Thousands of red shirts were allowed to scream rebellion, in the face of the best equipped force in India. The craven-hearted pilot is a sad thing for an Imperial people.

The force under Elphinstone's command was sufficient and staunch enough to ride a storm twice as bad. It was easy to have marched to the Bala Hissar, which dominates Kabul—two British battalions had spent the winter there in 1839. Thence Kabul would have been compelled to find supplies.

Folly opened its dance by allowing, through sheer incompetence, the Commissariat fort outside cantonments

[1] The Eurasian officer already referred to as commanding the Shah's contingent in 1834.

to be captured. It is desirable to have the place where Afghan contractors and camels bring you supplies, outside your perimeter, but it is mad folly not to protect it. It was lost and no man was bold enough to retake it. The Sepoy regiments lost their *élan* and *moral*, the 44th to some extent, followed suit. The Horse Artillery alone kept their pride of place. Petty disaster and humiliation followed on each other. Much blame is attributed to a senior staff officer, who listened to no one, browbeat all who came with suggestions, believed that all was lost and would see nothing done to help. When the decision to go was taken the precious days before the snow were footled away because of the vast accumulation of baggage. A man worthy of the name would have left it and been off. Some unholy curse followed this unfortunate force to its graves in the snow.

The story of how by gross military inefficiency a bad civil situation became a military disaster—an entirely unnecessary military disaster—is too long and heart-rending to be told here; how commissariat stores were lost by folly; how daring junior officers, only too anxious to lead and to fight, were thwarted by incompetent or timid or quarrelling seniors. No staff work, no courage, and no enterprise, and indeed no common sense; produced an appalling situation. The soldiers, who could have gone to the Bala Hissar and stayed there in security, insisted, against the wish of the Envoy, in concluding a treaty of evacuation with the rebels. Akbar Khan, the son of the Dost, was now the leader of the hostile Khans. The Envoy, not without courage himself, lost heart. Riding out to a Durbar with some of his staff on 23rd December, when seven weeks, seven precious weeks of moderate weather had been lost, he was murdered and his assistants seized and carried off. It was the hand of Akbar Khan that did the deed, but it

is not improbable that the murder was done in a sudden gust of anger during a struggle, when seizure alone was intended. The unfortunate Envoy was last seen holding Akbar Khan's arm and saying, " *Az barai Khuda!* "— " For God's sake. . . ." Trevor, who was with him, was also killed, Lawrence and MacKenzie being taken prisoners.

With the loss of the Envoy things hurried on to an inglorious capitulation. A treaty was signed in which the Afghans guaranteed safe-passage through the passes. But the heavy frosts had already arrived, and were destroying the hearts of the Indian soldiery and followers. Because the force would not give up its baggage and waited for carriage, it was not till 6th January that it started forth in the snow from its comfortable cantonments,[1] 4,500 fighting men, of whom 690 were Europeans 2,840 Indian infantry, and 970 cavalry. All guns, except six of the Horse Artillery and three mountain guns, were given up, and General Elphinstone sent orders to Nott and Sale to evacuate also, which, however, both those independent commanders refused to accept. Through the prolonged agony of the passes and the badly managed retreat we will not follow the pitiful story of soldiers thrown away by their leaders. Akbar Khan could not compel, even if, as seemed possible, he wished to, the promise of safe-conduct. The frost-bitten, wind-swept force, with many thousands of followers, perished in the defiles. A few officers and ladies were taken as hostages or for protection by friends, a few were preserved as they fell into Afghan hands. The bulk died on their tracks, the last effort being when the last remaining Horse Artillery and their guns galloped at the last barrier in the Jagdalak Pass. Small parties of the fittest struggled towards Jalalabad, but fell to treachery,

[1] On which vast sums had been spent.

and at last only a weary doctor, Brydon,[1] on a dying pony struggled into Jalalabad.

There was no getting away from the fact that a well-equipped British force of 4,500 men had been destroyed by the tribesmen in alliance with *Général Janvier*. In a letter from Lady Sale at Kabul, written to her husband, she speaks in the most unmeasured contempt of the Envoy, just killed, and the incompetent control of the military chiefs, which would assuredly result in the loss of the whole force.

"Elphinstone's Brigade" started from Kabul thus:

1 Troop of Bengal Horse Artillery . .	90
H.M. 44th	600
5th Bengal Light Cavalry (2 squadrons) .	260
5th ,, N. Infantry . . .	700
37th ,, ,, ...	600
54th ,, ,, ...	650
5th Shah's Irregular	500
Other Irregulars	210
Shah's Infantry	870
Sappers	20
	4500

With them were officers and soldiers' wives, children and some 15,000 followers with their women and children—a terrible crowd and quite unmanageable, but who dogged and hampered the fighting men.

The strange personality of the tragedy is Shelton who, to the despair of the troops, was one of the prisoners given up to satisfy Afghan demands in the last stage of the retreat.

This is how Sir John Fortescue writes of him: "It

[1] Curiously enough he was later to go through the protracted evil of the defence of the Residency at Lucknow.

was characteristic that he was the one individual who was not softened by the mental and bodily distress of Elphinstone. . . . He quarrelled with every one of his fellow captives save Colin McKenzie. . . . He met his end through a fall from his horse in the barrack square in Dublin, and it was said that the regiment turned out and gave three cheers. Yet the brightest figure in the retreat from Kabul is that of the little cantankerous man with his right sleeve empty, ever at the point of greatest danger, watching every movement, with untiring vigilance, securing every point of vantage, husbanding the strength of every man, inspiring every soul of the rear-guard with his own calm heroism. . . . To so gallant a spirit much may be forgiven."

JALALABAD AND GHUZNI

But though a force had been destroyed at Kabul or lost, it did not mean that the whole British Army had gone, and it is desirable to keep this fact clearly before us. The force in Southern Afghanistan was intact under the stout Nott. When the first trouble threatened he had stopped McLaren's brigade from marching to India, and at Macnaghten's request, on the murder of Burnes, had sent it up the Kabul road. Compelled to turn back by winter weather, it rejoined Nott, and left that commander with a strong force whose *moral* was high.

It consisted of Skinner's Horse, the 40th Foot,[1] and seven Sepoy battalions, with a regiment of the Shah's Horse. Kelat-i-Ghilzai was also garrisoned, as was Ghuzni. At Jalalabad, Sale whose *moral* had collapsed, was eventually persuaded, chiefly by the energy of Captain Broadfoot, of the Shah's Sappers, to stay where

[1] The difference in the numbers of regiments in the formations at various stages of the campaign are due to movements in relief.

he was till relieved from India. Once the old man's mind was made up he did it well enough ; but a curious period of defeatism supervened on the arrival of Dr. Brydon.

The Auckland demoralization had attacked the hearts of the Jalalabad force. At a Council of War, McGregor, the fearless Political, advocated treating with the Afghans for an evacuation, despite their knowledge of how that had served the Kabul force. Only Backhouse the mountain-gunner and Broadfoot the engineer resisted. Even Monteith the good soldier and, apparently, Henry Havelock the brigade-major were for a treaty. McGregor gave as his reason that knowing those in high places as he did, he believed that no finger would be stirred to help them. But the two young men shamed the others.

The 13th Foot and the 35th N.I. with Broadfoot's Sappers and Backhouse's[1] Mountain Train were all worthy of the Army and came to great fame. Sale's conduct of the defence was, however, feeble. Eventually the force defied all attempts to capture the town, and in the spring sallied forth and heartily defeated the besiegers. For once again the adage should be remembered that an Afghan attacked and an Afghan attacking are two very different things.

Ghuzni, garrisoned by the 27th Bengal Infantry under Colonel Palmer, held out for three and a half months, surrendering on the 6th March, 1842, under a promise of safe-conduct ruthlessly broken. The Sepoys, much deteriorated by the winter, were mostly massacred, and only the officers kept as prisoners, among them the lad John Nicholson. They had better have held out. Palmer was tortured to reveal the whereabouts of

[1] Many there will be who remember how men were stirred when Broadfoot's diaries were published in 1883, and the old horrors revived. The accumulated gilt left the shoulders of old "fighting Bob 'Sale,'" who was of no use save in a scrap.

treasure. Kelat-i-Ghilzai, under Craigie, held out till the arrival of the original orders to Nott to withdraw to the Indus, when his force[1] was relieved and brought in to Kandahar.

KANDAHAR

At Kandahar, Nott held his own with ease and determination, while an ineffective commander, General England, was endeavouring to put supplies in from Quetta. Against the General's determination the mass of Durani chiefs and tribes round Kandahar were powerless, and when the full meaning of the risings was clear, General Nott still further established his position by bringing in any of the Shah's troops who held the country around, and he was now in a position to carry out effectively any policy that the wavering Governor-General should indicate.

THE AVENGING ARMIES

Early in 1842 Lord Ellenborough arrived in India to replace Lord Auckland, and was able at once to impart some vigour into Government policy. Heartily sick of the whole imbroglio, Lord Auckland had seemed inclined to leave everything and everyone to their fate. Stimulated, however, by Sir Jasper Nicolls, the Commander-in-Chief in Bengal, a soldier who knew something of hill warfare and who was by no means a nonentity, Lord Auckland had authorized the collection of four Bengal Infantry battalions at Peshawar under Brigadier Wilde, and another, with some European units behind under Brigadier McCaskill. Mr. Clerk, the British agent at Lahore, tried to make the Sikhs send

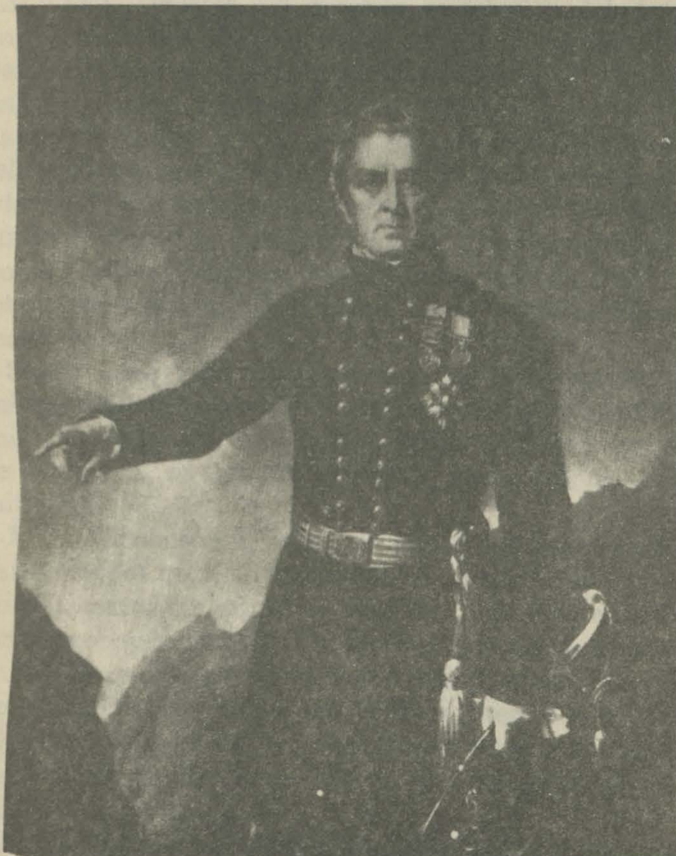
[1] The 3rd Shah's Infantry, who formed the major part of the garrison.

more troops to Peshawar. But it was to take more efforts than this to put things on a better footing. Wilde's Sepoys at Peshawar, weakened by fever, tampered with by the Sikhs, and suffering from the cold feet that soon overtakes Eastern soldiers when things go wrong, after one attempt to force the Khaibar, in which Ali Masjid, held by levies, was first occupied, and then for want of supplies abandoned—were practically useless. Eventually Major-General Pollock was appointed to command, and arrived at Peshawar with McCaskill's brigade, and behind that a force of European cavalry and artillery.

It was some time before any policy could be evolved, but at last it was decided to withdraw from Afghanistan, after restoring our prestige, and then leave the Afghans to settle their own affairs.

By 5th April, Pollock had collected sufficient men to advance, and had put enough heart into Wilde's enfeebled Sepoys to be in a position to carry out the very limited objective which had been given him, viz., the relief of Sale. With him was now a Sikh force, sufficiently stimulated also to make the attempt by his side on the dreaded Khaibar. His force consisted of 8000 men, in all eight battalions, of which two were British and three cavalry corps, viz.: 9th Foot, 31st Foot, 6th Bengal N.I., 26th Bengal N.I., 30th Bengal N.I., 33rd Bengal N.I., 53rd Bengal N.I., 60th Bengal N.I., 64th Bengal N.I., 3rd Light Dragoons, 1st and 10th Light Cavalry, organized into two divisions.

But he had not yet had the instructions which he and all worthy soldiers wanted, viz., to wipe out the British defeats at the point of the bayonet, to avenge at Kabul the murders and entirely unnecessary treacheries, and to release the prisoners as well as the officers and soldier families, including the widowed Lady Macnaghten and



FIELD-MARSHAL SIR GEORGE POLLOCK
Who led the "Avenging Army" to Kabul.

Lady Sale. Pollock, when ready, marched on 5th April and forced the Khaibar with little loss, arriving at Jalalabad to find that the garrison had never been in any real danger, had defeated the Afghans in style a few days before, and by so doing had reopened for themselves the sources of supply. In fact, there were many who said that had Sale stayed at Gandamak instead of hurrying down to Jalalabad in the autumn, not only would British influence have been preserved, but the total destruction of Elphinstone's force would not have occurred.

Sale's force was a strong one, and was capable of holding its own anywhere so long as its supplies of food and ammunition[1] could be obtained; and food was to be obtained, so far as essentials went, by its own initiative.

Lord Ellenborough, who had issued a stirring manifesto, was not quite so prompt as he sounded, but it was evident that there would be difficulty in finding a satisfactory policy to follow. The Shah still sat on the throne of Kabul, and was saying, not without some show of reason, that the worst of our disasters were due to our failure to follow his advice. He was, however, murdered near Kabul on the same day as Pollock entered the Khaibar (v. p. 86).

Once at Jalalabad, Pollock found difficulty in getting further instructions. The Governor-General had issued to him and to Nott, as well as to Mr. Clerk at Lahore, a masterly enough résumé of the position, with a general explanation of the policy of the British Government,

[1] It is an interesting fact that when Sale marched from Kabul the 13th were armed with flint-locks which were so worn that large numbers could not be fired. Sale had asked for a re-equipment from 4000 percussion muskets that had recently come up. This Elphinstone had refused, in spite of the fact that the 13th had to chastise the Ghilzais and put down their rebellion.

THE FINALE AT KABUL

The sight at Kabul was a magnificent one. The British army now camped in the valleys round was far larger than the Afghans had yet seen. Six European Corps were on the ground, with several batteries of Horse Artillery and innumerable Sepoy battalions. Streets of tents as far as the eye could see, and masses of men in scarlet coats and black *chakos* paraded and marched in every direction. Brass helmets flashed in the sun, guns peered from every corner of vantage, and the pomp of an efficient British Army of early Victorian days was never more in evidence. The Afghan sirdars were overwhelmed with anxiety as to what would be the consequences, and had no real illusions as to their power when it came to a serious conflict.

It is not perhaps out of place to glance at what the conditions really were in Kabul after the departure of Elphinstone's force. Shah Shujah, not devoid of resolution, conscious that the British troubles were of their own making, and due to some extent to their disregard of his advice, for he had urged them even at the last to come into the Bala Hissar to face the storm, had decided to remain. The massacre of the army had come as a great shock to him, who still relied on British support. It must either mean collapse or a renewed occupation. For some months he tried to ride the storm and play in the proper Afghan manner, one faction against another and one chief against the next. On the 5th of April, however, His Majesty was proceeding in a litter with an escort of Hindustanis near Kabul to review some troops going to join Akbar at Jalalabad, when he was ambushed by one of the sirdars and murdered with many of his party. Other factions at once brought Prince Fath Jang, his son, to the throne, where, bullied and browbeaten,

he remained till September, with Ghulam Haidar Khan Populzai as his vizier. But on learning of the approach of Pollock, he escaped, and arrived at the latter's camp in a bedraggled condition.

Lord Ellenborough had had the wisdom to place General Pollock in supreme political charge, so that the earlier evils should not again arise. He was joined by the senior surviving political officer, Major Rawlinson, who had come up with Nott, and they were of opinion that an Afghan crown was an essential for the progress of business. With the acquiescence of all the leading chiefs who had "come in," Fath Jang was therefore replaced on the throne amid pomp and ceremony, the Union Jack, however, having been hoisted with equal ceremony on the Bala Hissar a few days earlier.

It was now necessary to decide what actual punishment should be inflicted on the guilty city of Kabul. The Afghans in arms had themselves been heavily defeated and had lost considerably, while punishment on certain individuals who had fallen into the avengers' hands had been carried out. The Kohistanis in the valleys behind Kabul were still in arms, and had been specially active against the British. It was decided to raze Istalif and Charikar, where the Shah's Gurkha regiment had been so mercilessly and needlessly massacred. This was done by a force under Sale. Towers and fortifications were destroyed, but reprisals in a cruel form did not, with a few exceptions, take place, despite the fact that the troops were hard to hold. They had marched for miles through the remains of their comrades, they had seen the barrier at Jagdalak derisively piled with their skeletons, and around them flocked the maimed and frost-bitten beggars who had once been not merely the followers of the unfortunate army, but Her Majesty's Sepoys[1] themselves.

[1] The E.I. Company was really but another form of the Crown.

For their succour and withdrawal Pollock had appointed a special officer with allotted transport; for they were many and pitiful, and more were known to be slaves in the interior.[1] Now and again in later years some European child would emerge, carried off as an infant to some fastness and brought up by Afghans.

But against this must be set the treatment of the captives, which for the most part had been reasonable, while in their journeys under durance they had met with many instances of kindness and sympathy; in fact, there was throughout many parts of the country a recognizable appreciation of the attempts that the British had made for the country's good.

The only public punishment decided on was the destruction of the Grand Bazaar of Kabul, the Chahar Chauk, through which the mutilated body of Sir William Macnaghten had been dragged and exposed to insult. And this was formally done by the Engineers after the inhabitants had been removed. Unfortunately some of the troops broke out and committed excesses.

When the time came to leave in the autumn, Shah Fath Jang's resolutions failed him, and he begged to abdicate and accompany the British.

THE RETURN TO INDIA

The return was soon to take place by echelons, Pollock leading, followed by McCaskill and then General Nott, the first move being on 12th October. To Pollock, who thoroughly understood the art of piqueting, the march was uneventful enough. McCaskill, however, was harried, both by Ghilzais and Khaiberrees, while Nott, whose experience was of the opener plains of the

[1] See the story of Subahdar Sitaram in *Sepoy to Subahdar*.

Kandahar district, got an even severer handling, losing more men and animals than should have been permitted.

Nevertheless, the operations had been an unqualified success. The British had defeated every combination, and had carried their colours whithersoever it pleased them. Vengeance, but not ruthless vengeance, had been taken, and though the policy underlying the whole venture had ended amid dire failure and contumely, British military prestige was restored. The chatter and the underground muttering in India died away, and the British officer felt that he could look Indians in the face once again.

Leaving Shah Shapur at Kabul, a gallant lad and younger son of Shah Shujah, to whom the sirdars had offered the precarious throne, the British Government had serious thoughts of handing the province of Jalalabad to the Sikhs, and had told Pollock not to destroy the defences of that city. These instructions, however, came too late; and in any case the Sikhs themselves, of whom a brigade had actually been induced to accompany Pollock to the ancient Indian province of Kabul, were not prepared to accept the grant. It was then offered to the Rajput chief, Gulab Singh of Jammu, who had military forces quite equal to the work. But this also fell through, and so Jalalabad, with its old Hindu remains, is Afghan and Moslem to this day.

The passage through the Punjab was uneventful. The attitude of the Sikhs, and indeed of India generally, *vis-à-vis* the Kabul disasters, had been one of the causes in both Lord Auckland's and Lord Ellenborough's minds that had delayed prompter action in regard to the avenging armies, as Pollock's and Nott's forces were now called. Indeed, Lord Ellenborough had wisely assembled a considerable army of reserve at Ferozepore in case of trouble with the unsettled Sikh Durbar.

This force, with the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, was now waiting to give an enthusiastic and triumphant welcome to the returning armies, which were marshalled so that the defenders of Jalalabad should first cross the bridge of boats at Ferozepore and be received with military honour.

With Nott came the gates of Somnath, which he had wrested from the weeping priests at Ghuzni, and for which Lord Ellenborough was so ridiculed. Their arrival had indeed been notified in a somewhat flowery proclamation, for Somnath itself was ruined and in Moslem hands. But, as has been pointed out, it was Runjhit Singh of Lahore who had originally bargained for their return and started the idea.

So ended in honours and rejoicings this "Great Adventure," which had had such phases of sunshine and storm, and which had wrought such unintended havoc in Afghanistan. Better managed, even if not wisely conceived, it might have had far less deplorable results. Yet, nevertheless, its results for good are by no means undiscernible as we study the warp and weft of the modern and, until 1929, stable, Afghan kingdom which we eventually succeeded in establishing.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF'S COMMENTS

It is the modern vogue to endeavour to point the moral and adorn the tale by deducing lessons from events that have passed, and to minister to that desire it may not be out of place to read the reasons assigned for our failures in Afghanistan by Sir Jasper Nicolls, the Commander-in-Chief at Bengal, who had succeeded Sir Harry Fane, the Chief at the outset.

He wrote as follows :



SOME INDIAN WAR MEDALS
The "Jellalabad" Medal in the centre.

"The causes to which I attribute our failure in Afghanistan are these :

1st. Making war with a peace establishment.
2nd. Making war without a safe base of operations.
3rd. Carrying our native army out of India into a strange and cold climate where they and we were foreigners and both considered as infidels.
4th. Invading a poor country and one unequal to supply our wants, especially our large establishment of cattle.
5th. Giving undue power to political agents.
6th. Want of forethought and undue confidence in the Afghans on the part of Sir William Macnaghten.
7th. Placing our magazines, even our treasure, in indefensible places.
8th. Great military neglect and mismanagement after the outbreak."

These comments not only sum up very tersely all that has been related and that happened, but are points of which neglect in later campaigns has always produced the same results. They are, moreover, points which Governments and optimistic planners of campaigns will do well to have before them for all time.

And through it all we may discern the inevitable call to carry our standards where the Mogul had found their limits.

THE DOST BACK IN KABUL

The withdrawal of the victorious avenging armies did not immediately settle the question of the throne of Afghanistan, where Prince Fath Jang had sat uncomfortably after his father's murder at the instance of the Barakzais, for want of a better. But he was not prepared to remain a minute after the British finally withdrew.

He and all the family of Shah Shujah would accompany the British to India, including poor, blind Shah Zaman, at whose name for a while even the great Marquess Wellesley had paled. But a king of some sort under whose name the pot could seethe was necessary, and a younger Saduzai scion, Prince Shapur, the child of a Populzai lady, was, as stated, offered the throne.

In the meantime a proclamation by the Governor-General gave permission to all Afghans in India to return to their own land. Dost Muhammad in Calcutta showed no eagerness whatever to avail himself of the situation. He disclaimed the least knowledge of what had been happening in Kabul, declaring that the Saduzai intrigues must have produced the troubles. He was, he said, the prisoner or the guest of the British as they might ordain, and he had been more than handsomely treated. Disgusted probably by the ready falling away of his supporters in 1839, he seemed to be void of any desire to return. Nevertheless he eventually did so, quietly and informally, to be installed in his unstable seat by the predominating influence of his son Akbar Khan amid general consent.[1] The former Barakzai governors returned to their provinces automatically, and he was soon able to take up the old ground. The Afghans themselves had had enough of fighting either internally or with invaders for some time to come, and the Dost's seat was a fairly easy one.

He was, nevertheless, but Amir of Kabul, Ghuzni, and Jalalabad, and it was some ten years before he was able to conquer Afghan Turkistan and occupy Balkh, to which he appointed his son Afzal Khan (the father of Abdurrahman) as governor. In 1853, he recovered Kandahar on the death of his brother Kuhn Dil, and in 1854, Herat for the first time was added to his kingdom.

[1] Young Prince Shapur slipping quietly away.

THE SECOND AND THIRD WARS. SCINDE AND GWALIOR CAMPAIGNS

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUEST OF SCINDE, 1843

Early History
Sir Charles Napier
Scinde and the Withdrawal from Afghanistan
The Ameers and the Treaty
The Desperate Battle of Meeanee
The Battle of Dubba or Hyderabad

EARLY HISTORY

THE Conquest of Scinde[1] is perhaps the most important step in completing the prosperity of a United India that the British ever took. It resulted in opening up the mighty rivers to free trade, and producing the status which finishes with the spreading of the water of the Indus on millions of arid acres, by the great Lloyd barrage of Sukkur which Lord Willingdon opened in 1931. It was only a conquest in that it rejoined to India what the Afghans had taken, and a land which had been but little more than a generation in the hands of as wild and ruthless conquerors from the hills as ever harried a peaceful people. Its conquest, however, involved a strange controversy between two famous public servants in which great interest still lies, it therefore needs treating more as a historical presentment than as a vignette of a campaign. It is a story not very easy to follow, and one that has been grossly misrepresented, both by the Press of Bombay at that period and by a certain class of Victorian historian. The lies were told, and having a start, were never caught up, although the publication of Lord Ellenborough's letters and correspondence many years later, make the policy perfectly clear.

An outline of the British view of the position of Sind has been given in Chapter II, but it will be well to

[1] This is the old British way of spelling, Sind will be used hereafter.

pursue the matter a little more deeply. To view the question in correct perspective we must first of all revert to the days of the Mogul Empire before Nadir Shah, the Persian Turk, invaded India and cut off therefrom the northern provinces, viz., Afghanistan as we now know it, and the various provinces of the Indus. In 1748, Nadir Shah, otherwise known by his assumed title of Nadir Khan Quli, the Slave of Destiny, was murdered and the Durani Empire of Ahmad Shah Abdalli commenced. Sind, the great fluvial province of the lower Indus, was a pure Indian province, largely inhabited by people analogous to the Jăts of the Punjab and the Jāts of the neighbourhood of Delhi. They had not undergone the centuries of colonization by Mogul, Turk and Afghan as had the upper provinces of the Indus, for the routes from Central Asia converged on various points higher up at or near the Indus, from Multan northwards. In the eighth century there had been an Arab conquest of Sind and an Arab kingdom founded from Basra, about the time of the Saxon move to England, but this, while introducing Islam long before the faith of the Prophet had reached the rest of India, had faded away as the Arab Empire dwindled in power. It is now but marked by the striking similarity existing between that hardy race of sailors, the men who sail the great vessels up the Indus, and those who follow a similar vocation on the Tigris. As the Shatt-el-Arab came to the Sind in the eighth century, so in the twentieth the Sind came to the Shatt, for time is in no hurry to make its adjustments.

In the days of Aurungzebe, the last of the Great Moguls who was great, Sind, which is but the Indian name for the Indus, was a province of Delhi, populated by an exceedingly industrious peasantry, who dwelt within reach of such inundation canals as their skill could take off the Indus in its flood season, waiting

patiently on the desert fringe for more water, as indeed does all India. Now at last they are to see what countless generations have dreamed of, the spreading of the surplus water of the Indus and the Punjab over their lands. The completion of the great barrage of Sukkur, will put many millions of acres under wheat and bring wealth and land that is now desert to several million peasantry, so hard and so impious is the rule of the British that succeeded to King Sword and Queen Famine. But that, too, is but by the way, save that "old Peccavi," the nickname borne of Punch's mot. "*Peccavi*" (I have Sind), dreamed it all, as he carried out the behests of the great and good Lord Ellenborough.[1]

When Ahmad Shah founded his Afghan Empire from the derelict Mogul provinces across the Indus, Sind was one of them. After the manner of the East, nay of the world, patient peasants have overlords, barons who strive with one another, and reap the guerdon of rent and cess where they sow not. Sometimes they earn that cess by offering protection, which is their sole right that has any justification, often they earn it not at all. The peasantry watch the come and go of barons, Norman and Saxon or Dane, Mogul or Turk and Afghan, and turn the plough deeper in the sod, and pray that the new master will not be more unreasonable than old master. And the great kings higher up in the scale cared not, save only Akbar the Great, who it be and how the peasantry are treated, so long as they got their share of the revenue and their meed of military service.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century when the Moguls were struggling with Persia for Kandahar and Lower Sind, the overlordship thereof had fallen to a fanatical family from Persia, the Kalloras. In 1778,

[1] Kurachi before the present depression far transcended in wealth and importance even Sir Charles' rhapsodies as to its future greatness.

the Kalloras were ousted by a Belooch[1] tribe and family, the Talpoors, who divided the country among them into chieftaincies and were confirmed in their seizure by the Durani power which claimed the Empire in which Sind lay. The Talpoors ruled by the help of their mountain neighbours with great ruthlessness, over a humble peasantry. When the original Talpoor chief died in 1780, his four brothers, known as the *Char Yar*, divided the power, calling themselves the Ameers of Sind, in which the headship in each State remained with the eldest surviving brother. The Ameers of Hyderabad with Mirpur were the Lords of Lower Sind, and the Ameer of Kairpur, Lord of Upper Sind, but the Ameer of Hyderabad was recognized as having some accepted authority over all called "wearing the Turban." When the Durani Empire crumbled, and the Barakzai viziers seized the power from the family of Ahmad Shah, tl Belooch chiefs of Sind all tried to throw off their allegiance to Kabul.

Afghanistan as related broke into several independent chiefships also. But in all these temporary fissures two historical and indeed geographical truths remained. Sind was either a province of India or of Afghanistan, and the little pots could not hope to swim long alone in the stream. The plans for an outer and inner league of States to combat the Tsar and Napoleon have been told.

When Shah Shujah first tried to regain his throne he did so, both in 1818 and again in 1834, via Sind and Shikarpur. The Ameers of Sind then attacked him and were defeated, paying him five lakhs of rupees to get rid of him, which was nominally arrears of tribute to Kabul. Britain's interests in the open Indus have been explained.

[1] The spelling of the period. In other places the modern Baluch and Baluchistan is used.

The interests of the whole world were involved, and interference with trade on the river was a fruitful matter for quarrel between Runjhit Singh at Lahore and the Ameers of Sind. It was obviously essential that the question of transit, transit dues, and the equitable satisfaction of any just rights in dues, should be amicably settled. At the beginning of the thirties, Colonel Pottinger had been sent to Sind to open up some *modus vivendi* and to represent the Company. Further, Runjhit Singh, who had absorbed all the other Afghan districts on the Indus, was quite prepared to conquer Sind and the Ameers were equally anxious to save themselves. What the British wanted was peace and order and reasonableness along the whole Indus and at this or indeed at any period they had not the slightest desire to annex the Punjab or Sind. These happenings were but thrust on them by fate. But it must always be remembered that Great Britain as the *de facto*, and in a certain sense the legal successor to the broken Mogul power, had the right of supremacy and influence in all the provinces that had broken off the parent stem in the long process of degradation through which the Empire had passed. Fate drew her on unwillingly. Her power to resume, made her right good.

The history of the Conquest of Scinde is directly connected with the story of the attempt to restore the Durani power in Afghanistan which drifted into the First Afghan War. As part of those events, as explained, we had required from the Ameers an agreement to our passage of their territory from both north and south for our own, and the Shah's troops, and the temporary rendition into our hands of the great fortress of Bhakkar which dominated the world's highway, the great crossing of the Indus in Sind. Now this treaty which, however immediately forceful, was but the rightful demand of a

paramount power, was not unaccompanied by many advantages pecuniary and otherwise. Had those princes chosen to abide by their engagements and be reasonably attentive to the advice and suggestions of the British Resident, Sind would have remained independent if tributary, exactly as their neighbour the Khan of Bhawalpore has remained to this day.

During the vicissitudes of the Afghan War, a British force garrisoned Kurachee and held a cantonment at Sukkur. By the skill of the political officers, the Ameers and their wild gatherings of tribesman retainers, Afghan mercenaries and the like, were prevented from joining in the wild uprisings against the British. But Colonel England, who commanded in Sind, had got himself into an entirely unnecessary and disgraceful reverse at Haikalzai beyond Quetta in an attempt to take supplies through to Nott in Kandahar.

It was considered necessary to put the affairs in Sind in strong hands when Nott marched to Kabul, and the ineffective England was charged with evacuating the residue of Nott's forces from Kandahar. It is from this period that dates the whole story of the Conquest of Scinde.

SIR CHARLES NAPIER

Sir Charles Napier was one of the most distinguished soldiers of the period and indeed of British history, but this distinction had come on him unsought when, past sixty years of age, much shattered in youth by severe wounds in the Peninsula, he had been made a major-general by the brevet of 1837. Prior to that he had spent many enthusiastic years developing Cephalonia, the chief of the Ionian Islands of which he had been governor, and immediately before his sailing for India had been specially concerned in the handling of Chartist

riots in the north of England, where his sympathetic yet common-sense action had got the Government of the day neatly out of very unhappy troubles. Then Lord Hill, the Commander-in-Chief, offered him a command in India, and he found himself in 1841, commanding the Poona Division. The position in Afghanistan, which soon merged into the massacres of the Kabul brigade, the equally pitiful surrender of Ghuzni, and the defiant leaguer of Jalalabad, was on everyone's lips in India. The " Tails of the Army were down," not only because of disaster, but owing to the way in which efficient officers were shepherded to that disaster as a result of the astounding political system in force in Afghanistan. The first task he set himself was to kill the view that was being bandied about as an excuse for some of our troubles, that the matchlock was a superior weapon to the musket. Having some more knowledge of musketry than most officers of the day, he was well qualified to carry out experiments, which conclusively proved to the Bombay troops that they had the superior weapon, and he explained that the impression of a superior range was due not to the weapon, but to the fact that it was nearly always fired from heights, on our folk below, or engaged in escalade.

Then came the chance that the ambitious old soldier had been waiting for since the days of the Peninsula. And it is to be remembered that he was the son of an extremely able mother who was also the great-great-granddaughter of no less a person than Charles II, while his brother, General Sir William Napier, and his cousin, Admiral Sir Charles Napier, were equally distinguished. Lord Ellenborough, the new Governor-General, had realized how the system of political control had produced the situation that had ended in such humiliation, and he was putting a stop to it. In the last stages of

the Afghan War he had made the political officers subordinate to the commanders. In his opinion, also, the Ameers of Sind were endeavouring in every way to cozen the British and evade their obligations to them. He therefore appointed Sir Charles Napier to the command in Sind and to the chief political power. Major Outram, a most distinguished officer of the Bombay Army, long known for his successful and humane dealings with wild tribes and famous as a shikari, had been political agent for some time and had brought the Ameers without outbreak through the extremely difficult times of the Kabul disasters. He had also distinguished himself greatly in the earlier part of the Afghan War. He was in some disfavour with the new Governor-General over the matter of an unfortunate young political officer who had been accused of causing the ambuscade of Colonel England's column. This column had walked with its eyes shut up an entrenched valley held by the enemy. But at that time, so emasculated was the military enterprise of portions of the Army, that it could not attend to its own information and everyday safety. Outram had protested that the young political was not the Army's nursemaid. Incidentally the lad had died of his wounds raving. Napier was full of sympathy and asked that Outram might remain with him as his principal assistant for his political responsibilities. He had also paid great tribute in public to Outram's services and well-known attributes, so that they started off well together.

Napier arrived in Sind in September, 1842. Except for the garrison at the small port of Kurachee, the troops that Napier was to command were in Upper Sind at Sukkur, but the major portion of his force did not materialize till England returned from Kandahar, when Napier was to canton them at Sukkur and send the

Bengal troops back to the Punjab, which would leave him at most 12,000 men. In the meantime he was to use such troops as he had, to support the return of England and keep off the Belooch hill tribes from the latter. Outram himself, the chief political, was up sweetening the tribes in the Quetta neighbourhood to let the withdrawing troops alone. That withdrawal following on the victorious reunion of the southern and northern British forces at Kabul, was looked upon locally as a sad confession of ultimate weakness.

SIND AND THE WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

General England, as he now was, had no great reputation, for Haikalzai and other ineptitudes were in most men's mouths, but when his force eventually straggled down from the passes, Napier, thinking that he had been misjudged, wrote him a very handsome letter of congratulation. Later when he saw the miserable want of order and system prevailing, so that his whole force could have been easily destroyed, he was very indignant, especially at the way the wounded from Haikalzai were brought down and the want of care officers had shown for their men. He arrived at Sukkur by steamer at the end of September, having ordered the officer commanding there to move out to cover England's columns from the hills, and then met Outram for the first time. The two men of action took an immediate fancy to one another, which lasted for some little while, Outram proceeding shortly on furlough only to come back almost at once as Civil Commissioner to Sir Charles.

The Bengal troops were to march away, much to Napier's relief, as he described the feeling between them and the Bombay troops as extraordinarily bad. Then he sat down to get his troops under cover at Sukkur

before the next summer and generally to reorganize the area and settle the political system, as the Governor-General, in his unthinking way, had abolished the whole political establishment by a stroke of the pen. The Governor-General was determined to settle the Sind business once and for all and now offered Napier General Nott's troops when they returned down the Indus, as they would on emerging from the Khaibar. This, however, he did not want. What he did want was cavalry, and authority to expand the Irregular Horse now being worked to death under the young Bombay Gunner, Captain Jacob. He received eventually two regular regiments, the 9th Bengal and the Poona Horse.

With the evacuation of the remnant of Nott's force from Kandahar and the rolling up of the posts through the Bolan, and Kach-Gandava the Afghan campaign and Sir Charles' connection therewith was at an end, and the aftermath thereto in Sind was about to ensue.

THE AMEERS AND THE TREATY

The treaty which the Ameers of Sind were compelled to make with the British and Shah Shujah has been referred to. Whether it was fair or unfair is a controversy which has long since passed. It can now, as we know it after the lapse of years, only be called unfair if we consider the whole British venture or fate in the East unfair. Lord Ellenborough considered that the Ameers, reading from Outram's reports, had endeavoured to evade it at every turn. He now sent very definite orders to Napier to see it strictly observed, and ere long propounded an amended one which the Ameers must accept. Sir Charles thought the original treaty an undue interference with the Ameers, but that they who were notoriously the worst rulers and cruellest op-

pressors of a peaceful and unwarlike peasantry in India, would be infinitely richer and their people much happier, if it had been scrupulously observed. It is to be remembered that the Ameers themselves in the lifetime of the oldest of them had seized the rule, assisted by the hill Beloochees, and maintained their position with the help of hordes of tribesmen and mercenaries, both Afghan and Belooch. They had given lands and villages to be the prey of their followers and cared nought for the Sindian, whom they even prevented from making what they could from trading and agriculture, by the ignorance and oppression of their rule.

To Outram, who had handled them through the difficulties of the Afghan trouble, they were picturesque chiefs for whom in some ways he had sympathy and affection, and to whom he had in the handling of them, given all sorts of assurances. He, like Henry Lawrence, aimed and dreamed more of making chiefs and barons better, than at getting rid of them. But there was no doubt that they had at their call a great number of well-armed men, both the hill Belooch, from their own plantations of barons and followers, and from hordes of Afghans and other wild adventurers who would flock to their call. For the Ameers had immense personal wealth squeezed from the rich Indus traffic on which they sat, and from their peasantry. They were entirely indifferent to the wellbeing of the latter.

To enforce the existing treaties, to enquire into the more deliberate evasions, especially in the matter of fluvial trade to the Punjab and the dues arising, and to see the new ones signed was the task of Sir Charles Napier. Shilly-shally, intrigue and evasion were not unnaturally the order of the day. Outram thought the Ameers would sign and give guarantees, but Napier and his staff knew well how an army had recently perished

at the hands of political optimism and misjudgment, and the Afghan suspicion and atmosphere was ever present in their minds. They were not prepared to accept the political view and intelligence as correct. They believed that Outram was entirely misled by his own *jasus*[1] and agents, that the Ameers were conspiring to fight and were assembling immense forces. This, especially the assembling of forces, Outram denied. Unfortunately, but happily for the country, Napier was right, for the Ameers had collected 50,000 to 60,000 well-armed and very warlike followers. Napier decided that as the Governor-General's wishes were being deliberately evaded, and that the Ameers were not out to settle peaceably, he would march on Hyderabad, the centre of the trouble, where Outram himself had a residence, in the hope that his approach with his force would induce them to be more reasonable. The old treaty and the new, while bringing the Ameers into control, were greatly to their real advantage, and also a necessity of modern life on the rivers.

Sir Charles Napier was every inch a soldier and a regimental soldier. He had very soon pulled the draggled forces that had come down the passes into order. The troops were now alert and well-disciplined and in army metaphor, had their tails curling over their heads in a way that they had not curled for several years! Their Chief had, moreover, taken their fancy. But the winter of 1842–43 was passing and a Sindian winter passes to a Sindian summer and heat unbelievable, in a very short time. Napier was not going to let negotiations, which he believed spurious, drag on till the heat forbade his troops taking the field.

The Ameer of Upper Sind had his capital at Khairpur, not far from Sukkur. He was Rustum, a very old man,

[1] Spies.

a survivor of the seizure of Sind from the Kalloras. His son was intriguing to get the old man to abdicate in his favour, whereas the succession by right and custom must go to his eldest uncle, Ali Murad. Eventually Rustum did put himself in Ali Murad's hands and Napier recognized the latter as Ameer of Upper Sind. The sons of Rustum and other brothers took their troops out, and some actually moved to the famous desert retreat, the huge fortress of Emamgarh, where they had always been inaccessible in time of trouble. Napier felt that he must kill the idea of inaccessibility once and for all, and moved out on 26th December with his force, or as much as he could get camels for, to the edge of the desert at Deejee, thirty miles, and there left the bulk while he moved 350 of the 22nd Foot on camels, two 24-p. howitzers with double teams of camels, and 150 of the Scinde Horse. Pushing over heavy sand with very little water they arrived at Tugul on the absolute edge of the desert, forty miles from Deejee, and thence sixty miles more to Emamgarh, where he arrived on the 12th of January, 1843, carrying his water as well as his food.

The birds had flown, astounded at the British enterprise, whereon Napier used 10,000 lbs. of powder found in the fort in blowing up the stronghold, which he considered rightly enough a quite unnecessary appanage of Ameerdom. He then marched back to Pir Abu Bakr on the road from Sukkur to Hyderabad, and forty-five miles from the former, to which he had ordered the main body at Deejee to move. Outram he sent to Khairpur, having summoned all the recalcitrant relatives of Ali Murad to meet the Commissioner. As they did not come in, Outram persuaded Napier that if he returned to the Residency at Hyderabad, he could at any rate make Naseer of Hyderabad, and Sher Mahomed of Mirpur see

reason and sign the new treaty. Sir Charles, learning that the Ameers were increasing their forces every day and that some thousands of the hill Beloochees, Rinds, Logharis, Chandians, etc., were coming down behind him, decided to march on to Hyderabad and leave the matter to push of pike if need be, before these vast accessions of strength might arrive.

The force at his disposal was small enough, barely 2800 men, consisting of the Poona Horse, the 9th Bengal Light Cavalry, the Scinde Horse, H.M. 22nd Foot, the 1st Bombay Grenadiers, the 12th and 25th Bombay Infantry, and a company of the famous Madras Sappers, with Hutt's and Lloyd's batteries. This force, in great heart, despite the increasing heat, reached Muttaree, 20 miles north of Hyderabad and 160 miles from Sukkur, on the 16th of February.

THE DESPERATE BATTLE OF MEEANEE

Now was to begin one of those desperate battles which go to make up the great tradition of the British Army and the Army of India. At his camp at Muttaree Napier learnt that the Beloochees in immense numbers were established in and behind a deep dry water-course, the Fullaillee, some ten miles ahead. Outram's messages from the Residency still asserted that the Ameers did not mean to fight, had not massed their men, or alternately, had sent them away. Napier's information was far otherwise. 30,000 Beloochees in arms were ten miles from his 2800, and blocking the way to Hyderabad on which he was marching. Therefore he advanced on Meeanee at midnight, arriving before their position at daybreak, in line of columns, the 22nd Foot on the right, the mounted troops on the left. Close to his right was the eleven-foot unscalable wall of one of the immense

shikargahs or shooting-parks which the Ameers delighted to make. This was too thick to use as a method of approach, but Napier dropped a company of the 22nd at the only opening to hold it to the last man, and thus protect most effectively his front and rear and baggage column.

The latter were parked under the Poona Horse as guard, and then the battle was ready. It was to be shirked by neither side and its story is a sheer record of hammer and tongs, tulwar on bayonet and locking-ring. The British formed line and advanced towards the river-bed, to find that the enemy's musketeers were holding the hitherside, these opened a hot fire, and then masses of swordsmen rushed forth. They were slowly beaten back to the edge of the river-bank after severe hand-to-hand struggles, and then below them the British saw countless swordsmen and brilliant colours, a wild and picturesque sight. After three hours more of firing, of charge and counter-charge the cavalry on the British left got across the Fullaillee and dashed in among the crowds on the far bank. Then the Beloochees slowly broke away, but many remained to fight it out, giving no quarter and asking none. Napier tried to get his men to descend with the bayonet, but they, with better tactical flare, thought volley-firing from atop the bank better policy. The Beloochees left 5000 on the field. It was as brilliant and fierce a struggle as the Army had ever experienced, and the Indian troops vied with the 22nd in dash and courage. Hyderabad was occupied and the Ameer and his relatives surrendered.

Outram, who had a small escort of British and Indian troops, was attacked the day before in the Residency by several thousand Legharis, who were beaten off after a prolonged struggle. The Ameers had succeeded in

bringing over from the opposite bank some 20,000 of the hill tribes to swell their forces, Outram eventually withdrawing to his steamers, got in touch with Napier, and with a detachment was engaged on the day of the battle firing the Shikargah to drive out lurking Beloochees. After occupying the city, and putting 400 men in the great rock fort, Napier withdrew to the Indus bank and there threw up an entrenched camp, in case of need, but camped his men in the open in front of it. His force was now reduced to 2000 men, and he sent up to Colonel Roberts at Sukkur and down to Kurachee for every man that could be spared. The whole river-bank between Hyderabad and both Sukkur and Kurachee, however, was in a most disturbed state, stray bands of Beloochees attacking any post or detachment they could find. Lord Ellenborough, hearing of what was in progress, sent reinforcements from the Sutlej unsought; Stack and the 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, Blood's and Leslie's troops of Bombay Horse Artillery, and a battalion; while Roberts also sent a battalion and details. Time was getting on, the heat was getting great, and Shere Mahomed, the Ameer of Mirpur, had collected some 30,000 men, those who had fought at Meeanee and others, and now summoned Napier to surrender. The fate of the Kabul garrison was openly promised him: "He shall now be Cabooled," men said. It was not till well on in March that reinforcements could arrive. As Stack's column approached, by the same road that Sir Charles had marched, Shere Mahomed threatened to overwhelm him. Napier ordered Stack to double his last march and sent out Jacob's Horse to meet him, following himself with a strong column. They evaded Shere Mahomed by a day, and on the 22nd Napier had them all united on the banks of the Indus. On the 23rd ships brought details and drafts from Kurachee, and

unexpectedly too a host of masts appeared from the Sukkur, bringing a battalion and some much-needed gunners from Roberts.

THE BATTLE OF DUBBA, OR HYDERABAD

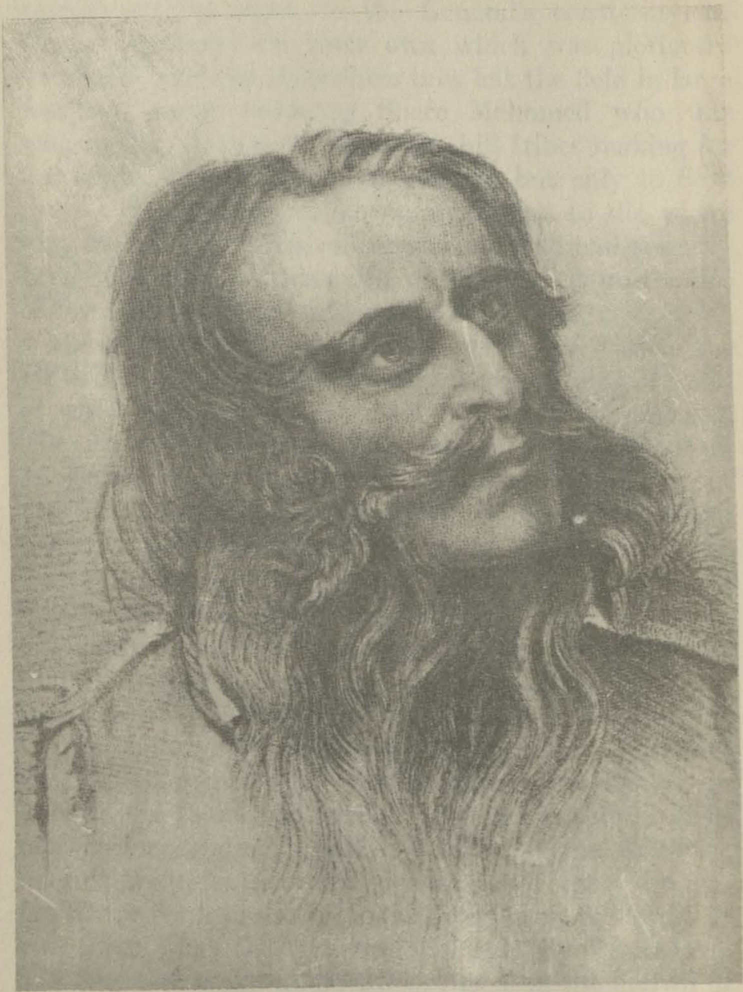
Thus reinforced, giving Stack's troops a day's rest, Sir Charles sallied forth on the night of the 23rd March to meet "The Lion," Shere Mahomed, who had spurned all proposals for negotiation. Marching ten miles inland, Sir Charles at dawn learnt that the Beloochees were entrenched two miles ahead, along a deep nullah which ran into the winding Fullaillee on its left bank, with their right on the village of Dubba. Deploying his force on the plain in front, he advanced in echelon from his left, the 22nd leading, under a sharp fire from fifteen of the Ameer's guns. The British force, pitifully small though it seemed for its task, was far superior to that that won Meeanee. When formed the line was arrayed as follows :—

The Poona Horse.
The 9th Bengal Light Cavalry.
The 22nd Foot.
The 25th, 21st, 12th and 1st Bombay N.I.
The 3rd Light Cavalry and the Scinde Horse.

Some 19 guns were in the intervals, only one of the troops of horse artillery having come up. It was such a fight as Meeanee, opened by the 22nd attacking the nullahs and gaining the village, battalion after battalion coming up in succession and throwing themselves at the masses of standards and swordsmen on their front. Napier in person gave the order to the 22nd to start. The fury of the troops was too much for even the Beloochees, who were driven from nullah to nullah. The

cavalry on the right, to the General's consternation, started a charge on their own which was gloriously successful, and the Beloochees now left the field in large numbers, some following Shere Mahomed who was making for the desert, others the hill tribes making for the Indus in the hope of re-crossing, but only to be a prey to the cavalry, while many elected to die where they stood. A British officer and his wife had recently been murdered, and his name was constantly on the lips of the Sepoys as they refused quarter.

Fierce as had been the fighting, the casualties to the British were far less than at Meeanee, totalling only 270, of which 147 were in the 22nd who had first engaged. The enemy's loss was estimated at 5000 with their 15 guns and 17 standards, and a complete loss of prestige and further desire to fight. Shere Mahomed had made for his capital at Mirpur, where the Poona Horse arrived next day in pursuit, when the townspeople opened the gates saying that the Ameer had fled with his family to the desert stronghold of Omarkot. Napier himself followed to Mirpur and sent Jacob and the camel battery, followed by the 25th N.I. to Omarkot. Owing, however, to the fear of the inundation, now due, the British commander was anxious to get his troops back to the Indus and recalled the Omarkot force. The officer commanding, Captain Whitlie of the Artillery, hearing that the Ameer had abandoned the town, referred for fresh orders and was directed to proceed. It was found that the fort was still held by Beloochees. The Ameer was gone, and the garrison on the arrival of the guns and the 25th Bombay Infantry, surrendered. A garrison was then left and the last stronghold of the Ameers, distant a hundred miles from Hyderabad, was in British hands. But the fierce summer was now in full blast, and it was important to get the



GENERAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, G.C.B.
The Hero of Scinde.

troops under cover. Thus ended this most dramatic campaign.

Sir Charles was immediately appointed Governor of Sind, which was annexed and steadily cleared of Beloochees, and then commenced several remarkable years of rough and ready common-sense administration, which well prepared the way for the ordinary civil administration which was to follow. For many years, however, Sind was a special problem attracting a wonderful set of British officers who accomplished more than even Sir Charles Napier with all his enthusiasms dare dream of. That great camaraderie and spirit of the Sind personnel and band of builders was something quite apart and lasted long in the land, up to the end of the nineteenth century, and even endures in some sense still. Now this province which Sir Charles and his handful of troops rescued from an utter darkness is about to see the waters of the Indus spread over the land. Its little *bandar* of Kurachee is one of the great ports of the world, and the province bids fair to be one of the richest in India.

The Outram controversy raged somewhat discreditably, and the General was angered that Outram gave to the India Office a memorandum of his, which he had not attached to the State papers but which it published. It was altogether an unaccountable episode, and at this distance of time we can feel that Outram had been much tried and strained by all he had gone through and was not at his best. The whole of Army opinion throughout

India was delighted to see the soldier act up to his responsibility and rely on his own judgment. And there is no manner of possible doubt that the Ameers not only had decided to resist and summon the hills to their aid, but had it not been for Sir Charles' fighting vigour, his force would probably have been lost. The Governor-General and the Duke of Wellington were loud in their encomiums, and Napier had full support for his methods of administration. His order book, both when getting his force disciplined, when fighting the excessive baggage habits of officers, and when getting the country happily quieted, are or were famous, for Sir Charles was a character; when he said things he said them in a forceful and unusual manner. In 1846, during the first Sikh War, he brought a force up the Indus and the Ravi to join Lord Gough in Lahore. Later when the outcry against "Little Gough," after Chillianwalah was great, Sir Charles was brought out to supersede him, as will be explained later. The stories of Sir Charles as Commander-in-Chief were many, and his orders and memoranda were often unusual and always to the point. Here is one of the most characteristic. In those days divorce proceedings in the Army usually involved a Court Martial and a sentence of dismissal on a guilty officer. In one such case where the officer was sentenced to dismissal, the evidence showed that the lady in the case had been rather provocative. Sir Charles refused to confirm, writing "I quash the case. History records no second Joseph."

It was later one of the tragedies of the period, that circumstances brought Napier into acute conflict with Lord Dalhousie, that most competent and difficult of Governors-General.

The medal for "Scinde" was worn with the universal rainbow ribbon (it was really the rising sun) given for

the Afghan wars, and the Gwalior star. After the manner of the time, there were no clasps, but the medals bore "Meeance," "Hyderabad," or "Meeance Hyderabad" on the obverse as the case might be. Hyderabad was the official name for the Battle of Dubba.

CHAPTER V

THE GWALIOR CAMPAIGN

THE TROUBLE IN THE MAHRATTA STATE OF GWALIOR

TO understand this third war, which despite its fierce fights would in modern parlance be called a "week-end war," we must refresh our historical memories. It was but forty years since Lord Lake's and Arthur Wellesley's implementing of Lord Mornington's policy had brought the Mahratta States which lay across the centre of India into definite subsidiary and subordinate alliance. Their armies had not been greatly reduced, especially that of Scindiah, the Maharajah of Gwalior, who had not broken his engagements of 1803 to any serious extent or joined in the war of 1818. All along the South-Western boundaries of the British areas on the Ganges and Jumna, was the territory of Scindiah. The disasters to Elphinstone's force in Afghanistan had shaken the profound belief in India of the Company's *ikbal*, of its god-derived fortune, as in a previous generation had Monson's miserable retreat before Holkar and Lake's four repulses before Bhurtpore. It has already been told how it was this condition of affairs in India, that had hindered the collection of troops at Peshawur for the avenging army in 1841.

Further, it was known to the Government of India that the Mahratta States were also, not unnaturally, in communication with Lahore, the last important state outside the British network. It was not, therefore, for

nothing that the internal states with large armies on a Western model, and in the case of the Gwalior State, some semi-European control, were looked on as potential dangers. The State of Oudh with its disorganized throne and its large virile population laying across the Ganges, was another added anxiety. Between this defile of states ran the long British strip from Allahabad to the Sutlej.

As the war-weary but victorious troops of the avenging army from Afghanistan defiled across the Sutlej and entered British India, *en route* to their various cantonments, their wives and families, and their rest, it did seem that a period of military rest for them, and economy for the public purse, might be hoped for. The Conquest of Scinde, the second of this remarkable series of war, was over, it had concerned troops other than those employed in the major Afghan fields, and it seemed that wars might now cease.

Not a bit of it! The ill-winded Gwalior pirne was to arise in an unexpected manner. On January 7th, 1843, the ruler of Gwalior, Junkoji Rao Scindiah, died childless. His age was such that he might have hope of issue, and no adoption had been made. His widow, a girl not thirteen, proposed to adopt a child relative as son, and this the British Government accepted, but obviously a regency was in prospect. Those acquainted with life in one of the Prince's states will realize what an occasion this would be. There were two claimants for the regency, claimants whose archaic Hindu titles highly amused the Army when it came to their turn to intervene. They were the *Mama Sahib*, the late Rajah's maternal uncle, and the *Dada* Khasji Wallah, the chief chamberlain and treasurer of the State. The Government of India, for reasons that were all for the general good of the State, its revenues, and its people, and whose duty to approve was inherent in the recognized

incumbent of the Mogul Indian throne, supported the *Mama*, who duly assumed control. But the young Ranee and her partizans were anxious to have the *Dada*, a man of most dubious reputation. Serious rivalry grew up, and intrigues of all kinds were rife, rife in an atmosphere where intrigue is the breath of life. The authority of the *Mama* was questioned and thwarted.

The army of Gwalior was a powerful one; far more so than the affairs of a state within the British system required. It consisted of 10,000 horse, 30,000 foot, and an immense park of the artillery caste and organized by the Count De Boigne half a century before. As smooth-bore muzzle-loading ordnance did not lose efficiency as the years rolled by, this park of artillery was a mighty one, and the gunners staunch and well trained. The army was full of the old tradition, and had to some extent, forgotten the trouncings experienced a generation and a half before. Part supported the claims of the *Dada*, inflamed by the report that the British Government were said to have informed the *Mama* that his authority would be supported by force of arms.

This large Gwalior Army, often in a semi-mutinous state, owing no very definite allegiance to its own crown, had long been an anxiety. It divided itself now into three factions, one that supported the *Mama*, another the *Dada*, this a brigade under Colonel Jacob, a Eurasian officer, and a third part that cared for neither. Naturally both parties endeavoured to secure the support of the military leaders. Then a dramatic incalculable situation arose. The little Maharanee Tara Bhai, twelve years of age, be it remembered, informed the Resident on the 18th of May, that she had betrothed the boy to a niece of the *Mama*, the Regent, and that the initiatory ceremony the Teeka, would take place the

next evening. This actually took place and the star of the Regent seemed well above the horizon.

On the 21st, however, the unexpected of the Orient happened. To his surprise the Maharanee, who as a matter of fact had no lawful status or power, announced to the Resident that she wished to get rid of the Mama. In spite of his remonstrance, she continued in her mad course, and in a few days, the Mama had left the capital. It may here be said, that the little Queen was in the hands of a dominating feminine personality in her entourage, one, Narunga, who was controlled herself from outside. The Dada, supported by Colonel Jacob's brigade of the Gwalior Army, now assumed control.

The Governor-General was, naturally enough, perplexed. Even in these days of cars, railways, telegraphs and planes, the situation would have been a disconcerting one. Lord Ellenborough was averse to playing too strong a game in a large state, but he had approved of affairs being managed by the man who seemed best calculated to carry the support of all of goodwill and sobriety. Now, this approved regent had been dismissed like a palace sweeper, in the face of the Resident's remonstrance, by a *coup d'etat*, outwardly sponsored by a child of twelve—for even in the precocious East a queen of twelve is not a very serious person. As remonstrances had no effect, the Resident who had withdrawn to Dholpore, was powerless and the situation began to move forward to anarchy. The terrible state of affairs at Lahore which had arisen on the death of Runjhit Singh and which daily grew worse, will be hereafter related. These, tragic beyond words, were giving the Governor-General further cause for anxiety. At Lahore was a masterless army of 70,000 or 80,000 men, ripe for mischief, here were 40,000 more, and between them they owned 500 guns. The position was inevitably

moving forward towards interference. Both armies might combine.

The summer was wearing on, and the coming cold season would allow of matters being straightened out. Gwalior, however, was already in a state of anarchy, especially in those inaccessible and wilder parts in the west. The parties at Gwalior were getting alarmed.

In the meantime the Governor-General had decided to assemble on the Jumna in the autumn a considerable army of exercise which would perhaps bring wisdom to hotheads. He himself had summered at Calcutta after being present at the return of the troops from Afghanistan. He had directed that no sort of military moves towards Gwalior should take place without his sanction and without his being on the spot to handle the question. In the meantime attempts were made to bring the Durbar, viz., the *de facto* government, to reason. There seemed some possibility of wiser counsels prevailing, and the famous Colonel Sleeman, who had suppressed the Thugs and brought turbulent unhappy Bundelkand to order, was towards the end of the year sent to conduct relations with the Durbar. At last the Maharanee expressed her contrition, but little more. That, however, gave no promise of peace for the Dada, and the army was largely in control. For long it had been the wish of the Durbar to reduce its military expenditure, but the army had always refused to be reduced. The British Government naturally wished to see so formidable a body put on a more reasonable footing commensurate with the true needs of the State. There was already in the State a small "Contingent" officered by British officers under treaty engagements. It was chiefly engaged in keeping open the road to the west; this contingent the British Government wished to see increased and the other force reduced.

It looked as if circumstances would compel a forcible decision, but before following the further march of politics we must turn to the Indian Army.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ARMY OF EXERCISE

During the final stages of the Afghan War, the Campaign in Sind and at the present juncture, we see Lord Ellenborough in close touch with the Duke of Wellington. All his military measures were written to the Duke, and the letters received from the latter were models of military wisdom showing a very intimate acquaintance with affairs in India.[1] Their publication as well as many other letters, almost entirely remove the basis of the criticisms passed on His Lordship's actions and still further emphasize the scandal of his entirely unjustified and arbitrary removal from the Governor-Generalship. In August, 1843, we find him writing from Calcutta to the Duke that he intended to assemble a large camp of exercise at Agra of 12 battalions, 6 cavalry regiments and 48 guns, some 4,000 men at Jhansi, and another camp of exercise, this one specially necessary to improve some inferior corps, at Amballa.

The army had undoubtedly recovered from its Afghan exertions. There was not much home life for the officers, it is true, for they had but come back to the hot season, and now were to go off to camp again, but presumably they and their unfortunate families were resigned. The native soldiery had had long furlough and all were cheerful enough at going into camp. The rewards and praise with which their Afghan efforts had been recognized had restored moral in all ranks. If there was one thing

[1] *The Administration of Lord Ellenborough*, R. Bentley and Son. 1874.

Lord Ellenborough did understand, it was how to get the best out of soldiers and how to reward promptly. In his anxiety to keep the Indian Army content and up to its form he had, as already related, somewhat trenched on the Royal prerogative regarding medals, but it was done for a purpose that was vital.

So in the autumn, the patient enduring army went under canvas again, watching the Dada-Mama controversy with amused interest, and expected at best but an interesting promenade into Gwalior territory. The married men thought regretfully of the bungalows they had bought or hired, hoping for a pleasant cold season, with new mats and door curtains, and something to make them forget their four years of war and tragedy. However, there it was, *La vie d'un soldat.* English ladies took the rough with the smooth, cancelled all their plans as happens still each year in India, and "on with the dance." The families of the British regiments, the rank and file's wives who had been through a good deal of tragedy, and had rough commons for four years, were in the same boat. Nevertheless, the troops set out for their places of assembly with a light heart and a jaunty step. Upper India was full of the scarlet columns on the march with their bands stirring the country-side, and the airs of Scotland and Ireland taking Jack sepoy as well as Atkins down the grand trunk road, *Scotland for ever, My Love is like the Red, Red Rose, Garyowen* and the *Lincolnshire poacher*; sending pigs and camels a-scuttling.

THE BRITISH ORDER OF BATTLE

In the order of battle it will be noticed possibly because more troops might be required, possibly for political reasons, the term "division," was applied to bodies of troops, which were practically brigades, indeed

we constantly find it applied to any force larger than a brigade of infantry or cavalry :

The Right Wing.

General Sir Hugh Gough with Staff of Army Headquarters.

Cavalry Division.		
Major-General Thackville.	H.M. 16th Lancers. Bodyguard. 1st Light Cavalry. 4th Irregular Cavalry. Lane's Troop H.A. Alexander's Troop H.A.	Brigadier Wretton.
	4th Light Cavalry. 10th Light Cavalry. Grant's Troop H.A.	Brigadier Scott.
2nd Division.		
Major-General Dennis.	14th N.I. 31st N.I. 43rd N.I.	Brigadier Stacy.
	17th Light Field Battery.	
3rd Division.		
Major-General Littler.	39th Foot 56th N.I.	Brigadier Wright.
	10th Light Field Battery.	
3rd Brigade.		
Major-General Valliant.	40th Foot. 2nd Grenadiers. 11th Grenadiers.	

One Heavy Battery of four 8-inch Howitzers.

Left Wing of the Army.

Cavalry.		
Major-General Grey.	9th Lancers. 8th Light Cavalry. One troop R.H.A.	Brigadier Harriett.
1st Brigade.		
Brigadier Clunie.	The Buffs. 39th N.I.	
2nd Brigade.		
Brigadier Anderson.	H.M. 50th Foot. 50th N.I. 58th N.I.	

Gwalior Contingent from Sipri.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL JOINS THE ARMY

General Sir Jasper Nicolls was no longer the Commander-in-Chief, but had given place to General Sir Hugh Gough, the fiery little Peninsula soldier who had come fresh from his success in China. Small, active, a horseman, Sir Hugh was a figure soon well known to the Army. He was a fighting General, if not a very learned one. As the Governor-General was coming up the country, Army Headquarters had established its camp at Cawnpore, then the premier military station on the Ganges, the headquarters of a divison, looking primarily to the constant alarms from Oudh, but also out towards Gwalior.

At the end of November the Governor-General moved up to Agra, where he arrived on the 11th December. By now, Colonel Sleeman was in constant communication with the thoroughly alarmed Maharanee and her party, and also with the wiser heads in the State. Every endeavour was now being made to persuade the Governor-General not to pass the Chumbal River. The intrigues

and pleas put forward were unending, but as there was no party or adviser capable of "producing a working solution," the Governor-General decided that he must go himself to settle the business, and go at the head of an army, since there was a contumacious army in being at the other side.

The main wing started towards Gwalior from Agra on the 12th December. On the 13th, Lord Ellenborough had written to the Maharanee to say that he was coming and what his objects were. This and the start of the troops brought not the Dada's head on a charger, but his person duly handed over. That was something, however, as it did not solve the question of the unruly, overgrown army, or the matter of an effective regency, the march continued.

No serious military trouble was anticipated. Four ladies accompanied the Viceroy's camp, and the scene where the dusts of the army and the hosts of its transport alone detracted from the promenade, was a brilliant one. It was in progress at the very best moment of the winter weather of the Upper Provinces. The negotiations to prevent the British crossing the Chumbal went on. No promises were too great to make, but it was too late and there was no one in Gwalior who could "deliver the goods" unaided. The Governor-General had summoned the little Ranee and the child Maharajah to meet him at Hingonah on the 26th and to return with him to Gwalior. The Army, however, in whose obstinate minds some memory of old glories stood, would not allow this.

THE PASSAGE OF THE CHUMBAL

It was important to get the force over the Chumbal before the Christmas rains should increase the water in the fords, already over three feet, and boats for bridging

would not be up for some days. Indeed it was not till the first week in January that the bridge was ready behind the army, and Sir Hugh Gough took his army over on the 23rd, by ford and ferry through a most difficult country of high cliffs and ravines, a terrain in which opposition would have been a serious matter. The famous scene, for it was a scene of great splendour, is marvellously portrayed in the well-known coloured engraving of the picture by Captain Young of the Bengal Engineers, "*The Passage of the Chumbal by the British Indian Army.*" The brigades are seen crossing in the early morning by ford and boat, the smoke of the fires at which the camp followers are drying themselves gives the impression of battle smoke, in the foreground below the artist are the 16th Lancers in scarlet, with white covers on their lancer caps, the Commander-in-Chief and Staff in full dress, cocked hats and feathers be it noted, and the great lines of yoked bullocks drawing the heavy guns—probably as living a military picture as ever painted and worthy to compare with a Rowlandson.

The Army, dripping from the deep ford, swung up the opposite cliffs and into the camp near Ningonah, the Governor-General's pleasure camp with them. On Christmas Day the two Gwalior Vakils, emissaries of the Durbar, left, saying that the Army was in complete control, would not allow the Ranee and her advisers to come.

It looked like a fight of some kind after all! His Excellency now ordered the force under General Grey in Bundelkand to advance on Gwalior also. There was no room for a failure, since he was compelled to glance over his shoulder at that other great lawless army across the Sutlej, and at the rather poor force at Ambala which alone stood between the vast Sikh forces, and British India. For long, military advisers and foreign

secretaries had pointed out to successive Viceroys, the possibility of the simultaneous action of these two pretorian armies.

The Government of India has often been in the position of a juggler intent only on keeping the balls in the air, knowing that if one dropped his performance would be marred. *Vis-à-vis* Sikhs and Gwalior the jugglers had been content if the balls did not fall, and the future must take care of itself.

This Governor-General, however, was always ready to face facts. The British Indian Army would go forward, and the days were gone for any other action to be possible.

It has been said that the Commander-in-Chief did not expect anything very serious—the overawed disbandment of the Gwalior troops, a fight with a recalcitrant brigade perhaps, at most. On Christmas Eve, however, Colonel Sleeman reported that the Army had definitely said that they would look on the crossing of the Chumbal as a hostile act. That did not worry the British Indian force. Just as Napoleon had believed that he, with his grand battery and his guards, could smash anyone who stood up to him, so was the British Army confident of defeating anyone they could get at. After Quatre Bras, the one fear of the French Emperor was that the British would not stand to their undoing. "*Enfin je les tiens des Anglais !*" cried he after leading the pursuit down the Brussels *chaussée*, and saw that Wellington would fight. So when Asiatics train armies in Western ways the British feeling always was, 'now we have them'! When Afghan armies have tried to stand, both in the wars that were just over, and in those to come, their defeat was inevitable. This unfortunate Gwalior Army was apparently going to put up a fight. Out-of-hand, at loggerheads with its own Durbar, it was, it said, going to fight, if the British tried to interfere with them and their unruly will. It

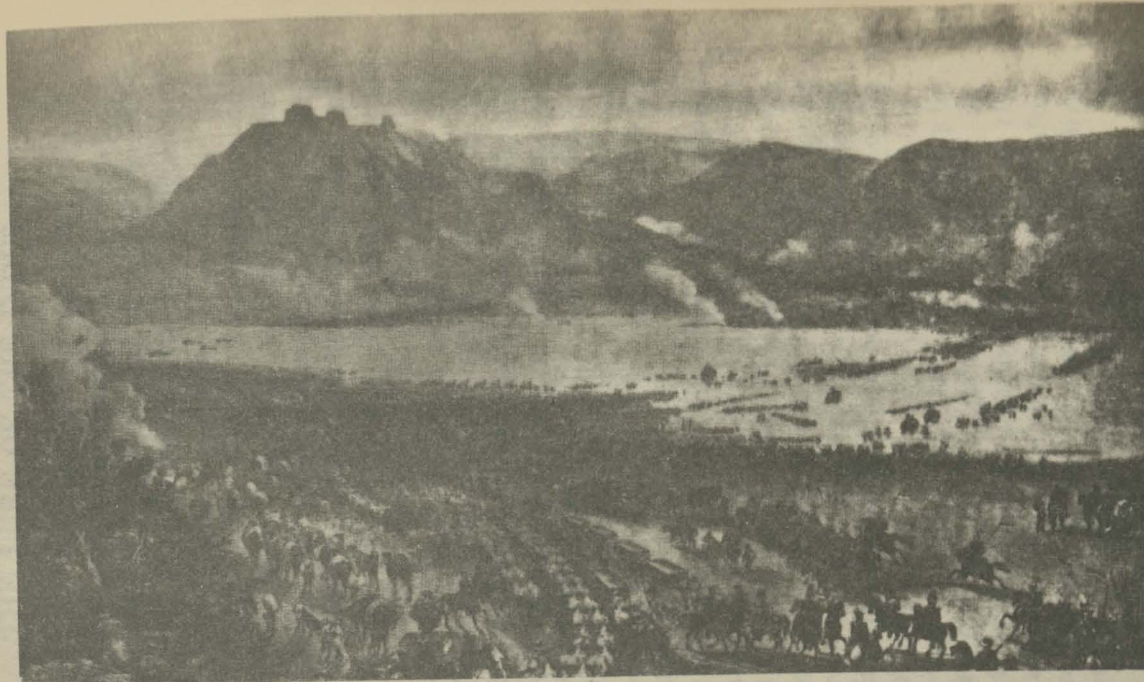
is quite probable that the subtle Brahmin brains in the Gwalior Durbar, saw that nothing but the British bayonet could bring them to their senses and make a Durbar rule possible. Subtle Brahmins suggest and intrigue, but don't talk about it.

The Christmas camp fires in that semi-promenade camp were happy enough, and the regimental officers wandering from one camp fire to another, exchanging greetings and looking up old friends of the Khaiber and Kandahar were jovial enough. The one topic was whether or no there would be a "scrap." Here and there some of the seniors were wondering what the "Jacks," the name of the day for the sepoy, the Indian soldier in his *chako*, and his scarlet coatee of Pimlico pattern, thought of it. There is a superb attraction about a Christmas camp in Northern India, and here it was, with the image of war added, and war that was not to be too serious; they had had enough of that in Afghanistan.

In the Governor-General's luxurious camp, managed by hereditary campers and tent-pitchers, who had practised the art for hundreds of years, all was merry also, especially with the four ladies of his party, ladies whose presence indicated that even Lord Ellenborough with all his information, hardly expected it would come to push of pike.

They were: Lady Gough and her daughter, who afterwards married Colonel (later Field-Marshal Sir Patrick) Grant, Mrs. Harry Smith, the Juanita of the Badajos romance, wife of Colonel Harry Smith, after whom are Ladysmith and Harrismith named. Mrs. Curtis, the wife of the D.A. Commissary.[1]

[1] To them all, Lord Ellenborough presented a decoration like unto the bronze war decoration that was given to the Army, but made in gold and enamel.



THE GWALIOR CAMPAIGN, 1843

The Passage of the Chumbal by Sir Hugh Gough (in foreground). From a picture by Captain Young of the Bengal Engineers.

THE ADVANCE ON GWALIOR OF THE TWO FORCES

On Christmas Day the Governor-General, who was one of those men who understood, which the British to this day do not, the value of propaganda—the presenting of your case the way you see it, before the world—issued a proclamation, telling India and the civilized world that he entered Gwalior territory as the ally of the Maharanee and the young prince. He came to free them and their more moderate advisers from the dominance of interested factions and an unruly army. Certain agreements were forwarded to the Durbar stating how the Government must be managed during the minority. The 28th was to be the final date of acquiescences. An end must be put to prevarication.

That day also it had been known that the Gwalior Army with its guns had actually moved out and was holding a position about the village of Chounda, immediately barring the road to Gwalior.

The country was outwardly level once the hillocks close to the River Chumbal were passed, but the level plains were cut with deep nullahs draining the monsoon torrents to the Chumbal, nullahs with steep mud sides often ten to twenty feet. The level plain, and the ground between the nullahs stood under crops of millet six foot high. The maps available naturally showed but the barest outline and had no tactical value.

In front of the position of the Gwalior Army was the village and mound of Maharajpore, unoccupied save by a piquet. Harry Smith, the adjutant-general, with staff had made a reconnaissance himself in the early morning of the 29th, but there had been little done in what would now be obvious routine, of half a dozen officers out in front trying to sketch the lay of the ground and make a tactical map for the morrow. Their report, however,

showed that the Mahratta Army was about Chounda, with its left on the little stream of the Asan, and its right open as if more troops were still to come there. Smith advocated either immediate attack before more troops arrived and trenches were strengthened or waiting for General Grey to arrive. Gough also *more suo,* would always take the fighting course, decided on the former and issued orders for the approach march to commence at early dawn on the 29th. It was a matter of some eight miles to the Chounda line, with Maharajpore a mile and a half nearer.

In Bundelkund Major-General Grey's force collecting at Jhansi and Kunch, not far from the Jhansi-Cawnpore Road, concentrated at Seondha, on the road from Kunch, on the 24th of December. From Seondha to Gwalior via the Antri Pass, the direct road is fifty-five miles, but it was thought that this pass would be held and also that concentration should take place further away from the Gwalior Army. From Seondha to the Antri is close on forty miles, but since that pass was very strong, and the main object of the two forces was to come within supporting distance of each other, Grey was directed to march on another seven miles, strike the Sipri–Gwalior Road which crosses the hilly country by Punniar and then move forward. Moreover, he would be joined on that road by a portion of the Gwalior Contingent from Sipri. Gough expected Grey to be at Punniar on the 30th, where he would be able to get into touch with him and concert joint plans. Grey, as a matter of fact, reached a point a few miles from the Antri Pass and immediately in front of it on the 29th. Discovering, as anticipated, that it was held, he passed on towards Punniar.

THE BATTLE OF MAHARAJPORE

Sir Hugh Gough's right wing of this army was to advance on the Mahratta position on a front of some three miles in three columns.

The right column consisted of the larger cavalry body under General Thackwell, comprising the 16th Lancers, a superb corps in magnificent fighting trim, with the Governor-General's Bodyguard, then a fighting body of horse that took part in several campaigns, the 1st Light Cavalry and the 4th Irregular Cavalry with Lane's and Alexander's troops of Horse Artillery. In the centre was Brigadier Valliant's Brigade, and on the left, to attack and crush the apparently weaker Mahratta right, was a stronger column of Major-General Littler with Dennis' Brigade leading and Littler with the 39th Foot and 56th N.I. behind, with one light field battery. Covering the left was Scott's Cavalry Brigade of the 4th and 10th Light Cavalry and Grant's troops of Horse Artillery. This latter officer, "Charlie Grant *Sahib*," was one of the most dashing horse artillerymen of his day, known to all the Indian Army. Where he was "things hummed."

Following the centre were the only heavy guns of any kind, a bullock battery of four 8-inch Howitzers.

The Governor-General asked the Commander-in-Chief where he should march, and he was told, "In rear of the heavy guns," so there on his elephant rode the Lord, and the ladies of his Christmas party.

The left column marched off half an hour before dawn, the remainder at daybreak, and by seven o'clock were in good order in their places a mile in front of the village of Maharajpore through which Harry Smith had ridden the yesterday and which had been occupied later by an enemy's piquet.

Not so to-day. It was found to be held by a strong force with guns posted on the eminence on which the village had risen through the ages. The scheme of the operation was thus, for the moment, thrown out of gear. The village must be taken; Littler with the leading column first saw what had happened and halted. Lord Gough coming up, spent an hour in reconnaissance, sending at the same time for his heavy battery, which, however, he quite forgot to use. Because he had told the Governor-General to follow the heavy battery and keep behind it, as the battery moved up the viceregal elephants came too. The sight of the howdahs was too much for the Mahratta gunners, who proceeded to open fire on them. Thus it was that His Excellency and his fair companions got into a battle, and it was the Chief's own orders that had done it, as was explained to him when he expressed surprise that Lord Ellenborough's venturesome ways should have brought Lady and Miss Gough into the firing line.[1]

At 8.30, the attack commenced by Grant's and then Alexander's troops of Horse Artillery galloping in to 500 yards to attack the heavy longer-ranging guns; nor, indeed, could they see where to shoot from among the crops at greater range. Littler was ordered to attack the enemy's left, Valliant the right, and both brigades advanced. A round shot through the ranks of the 56th N.I. killed three men and brought that battalion to a standstill, so that the 39th Foot went on alone. Sir Hugh Gough tried to urge the 56th on, and Havelock, who was with him, rode up and called out, "What regiment is this?" They said the 56th. "No! No! I want its old name," and they shouted "*Lambourne ki*

[1] The author has often heard Lady Grant, the wife of Field-Marshal Pat Grant, tell the story, and has seen in her hand the enamelled decoration that the Governor-General gave the ladies.

pultan!" the name of affection under which it had been famous and which all the men loved.

"Ah! that's more like it! *Shabash! Lambourne ki pultan*, Be Kings! and do your duty! *Shahbash!*" And the *Lambourne ki pultan* followed and helped the 39th Foot, who, however, suffered very heavily. With the help of the 40th Foot at the head of Valliant's brigade the village was stormed, the guns taken, the infantry, fighting in the houses to the bitter end, bayoneted, and ere long the village was in flames; so far ahead from its main force the detachment in Maharajpore was bound to be annihilated if defeated.

Then the brigades reformed and made for the main Mahratta position at Chounda. Valliant's brigade now turned left in rear of Littler, and moved against the Mahratta right, while Littler moved straight forward. Scott on the left flank was busy with hordes of Mahratta horse, but on the right, the strong cavalry brigade which should have enveloped the Mahratta left and perhaps have swept round their rear, failed to do anything. The obvious reason for this was that they came to an impassable gorge perhaps fifteen feet deep and more, one of the many rifts that the rains had torn in that soft soil. It was pretty obvious that officers' patrols and ground scouts had been doing little. Neville Chamberlain who was there with the Bodyguard, however, wrote that three hundred yards further on the nullah terminated and fine cavalry country supervened. La la!

In the meantime, the thirty light British guns of the three troops of horse artillery and two light field batteries closed in again among the high crops to engage the long rows of belching heavy guns served with a courage and efficiency beyond all praise. Littler and Valliant reached the trenches, turned right and swept down the line, Valliant, who had to carry three

lines of trenches, losing two successive commanders of the 40th who were killed at the guns' mouths. Most of the guns were captured and the infantry destroyed or driven to flight.

That was the end of it. It was not a fight that the Chief could be tactically proud of, but everything was obviously thrown out of gear by the difficulty in getting Jack Sepoy to face the long line of guns. Guns to his mind, should be answered by guns, and Gough and his artillery commander had not made use of the heavy battery which was waiting impatiently hard by.

Charlie Grant *Sahib* distinguished himself greatly at one period, by galloping in close to a battery of twelve heavy guns that was pounding the infantry. His own equipment was much knocked about, yet he constantly drove the Mahratta gunners from their guns, but with only a handful of cavalry could not capture them. This, however, was done later.

The British casualties were just under eight hundred, of which half fell to H.M. 39th and 40th. Of the Native Corps, the 16th Grenadiers of the Bengal Line, one of Nott's " beautiful regiments," made Grenadiers for their services in Afghanistan, alone seem to have borne their share of the battle, having 179 casualties.

That was the end of it so far as the main force was concerned. The 30th was spent in rest and refitting, and in clearing up the battlefield. On the 31st the Ranee came into camp and then Gwalior, including the famous fortress, was occupied without more fighting.

We must now turn to the adventures of the other column advancing from Jhansi, which also fought a sharp battle.

THE BATTLE OF PUNNIAR

There are very few accounts that tell much of the battles of this campaign, though rather more than Sir John Fortescue refers to in his *History of the British Army*, but of Punniar there is even less than Maharajpore, for it was battle fought out on no preconceived plan or instruction.

As General Grey moved on to Punniar after turning aside from Antri, he began to enter the low stony hills and a country cut up with ravines. On his right was a row of hills at varying distances and often within half a mile. Although he knew that there were enemy troops holding Antri, he does not seem to have taken any steps to find out more, for he trailed onwards with an immense baggage column of five thousand bullock *hakris*,[1] containing not only his troop baggage and tentage but a large quantity of supplies. After the unsoldierlike habit to which in the past British commanders, perhaps all commanders, are prone, the fighting troops drew near their camping ground with no one to protect the long convoy behind them, in this case over ten miles in length, save a small rear-guard. There was no flank-guard worthy of the name holding points on the hills to the right on which the enemy might appear. They, as a matter of fact, were actually marching in a column parallel to our own. By three in the afternoon the troops had arrived near the village of Punniar, and had just piled arms, when the sound of guns was heard from the rear of the column; cavalry troopers arrived in panic saying that the rear-guard was being cut to pieces.

Trumpets and bugles sounded the fall-in, and cavalry and horse artillery were hurried to the sound of the guns. It now was borne in on the mind of General Grey and his

[1] Two-wheeled lumbering country carts.

staff, that the Mahratta force finding that he was not going to force the Antri Pass, were marching hard to get between him and Gwalior. Seeing him moving into camp they were actually taking up a position on his flank, some three to four miles away and some of them had even got into a fortified village close to Punniar, while it was some of their guns and cavalry that were threatening his convoy. Pushing the Buffs with his sappers towards the line of hills, he learnt that behind them was the whole of that portion of the Mahratta Army, detached to cover Gwalior from the Bundelkand side. Anderson's brigade, the 50th Foot leading, with two N.I. battalions, moved up to and over the skyline on the right of the Buffs, only to come under the fire of the Mahratta guns in position. Half a mile on his right Anderson saw the Buffs and a battery were hotly engaged. In front of him, was a deep valley full of infantry with guns behind. He led his brigade on down the steep sides of the hill under a heavy gun-fire and then under shelter of a low bank halted to open fire on the Mahratta Infantry. General Grey was not to be found, and Anderson, free to follow his own inclination, sounded the advance and the charge, cleared the valley and captured the guns on the opposite slopes.

Brigadier Clunie with the other brigade, took the guns, eleven in all, in front of him, after sharp fighting, the Buffs leading and the 39th N.I. supporting. That was the end of it. The fight commenced at the end of the short afternoon and was over by nightfall. Grey's casualties totalled 213, the Buffs having 72, the 50th Foot 42 and the 29th N.I. 62.

It cannot be said that there is anything to be proud of, except the gallant attack by the Buffs, the 50th Foot and the 39th N.I., who had done it all largely " on their own." Fortunately, it was said, the singularly in-

competent brigadier of one of the brigades shot himself with his pistol the day before and Anderson had the command. The two cavalry brigades did little, and the Mahratta troops should have a far more severe handling. On the other hand as the war was to collapse, the less bloodshed in the misguided Mahratta Army the better.

From the Commander-in-Chief's point of view he had, despite tactical ineptitudes, brought the two forces of the enemy to two pitched battles on the same day, exactly where he wanted, had signally defeated them, and the war was over. You cannot ask for much more, and you should not look a gift horse in the mouth. Unfortunately some very valuable officers lost their lives, including General Churchill, the Quartermaster-General of the Army, Lieutenant-Colonel E. Sanders of the Engineers at Maharajpore, and several others.

After Punniar, General Grey marched on towards Gwalior, without further interference, the two forces were in close touch, and the paramount power, once more had quite unwillingly and without any ulterior motive found itself compelled to occupy the Mogul chair and suppress all who broke the peace. The two forces advanced into Gwalior itself on January 3rd, the Maharanee with them, freed from the rebellious army.

The Governor-General himself was able to settle the affairs of the Government and set up a proper council of regency purged of all fear. The army laid down its arms, receiving—that saving clause in such matters—its arrears of pay forthwith, and dispersed to its home, subject to certain re-enlistments referred to in the next chapter.

The Governor-General issued a bronze five-pointed star with a silver centre, inscribed, "Maharajpore" or "Punniar," respectively, made from the metal of the captured guns. It was originally issued to fix on the

coat without ribbon. Later it was decided to suspend it like a medal, with the new "military ribbon" of rainbow hue, representing the rising sun. This ribbon was issued also for the Scinde and Afghan medals, and was revived by Lord Roberts' Star, for the march from Kabul to Kandahar in 1880.

THE FOURTH WAR. THE FIRST SIKH WAR

CHAPTER VI

THE TERRIBLE DRAMA OF LAHORE

AFTER GWALIOR

THE situation in Gwalior was now ripe for final settlement. The British Government had not the least wish to annex, but merely to put this great State in its proper position on the map within the Indian policy as conceived originally by the Marquess Wellesley. Lord Ellenborough's memorandum regarding the relationship of the paramount power and the states which had entered into subsidiary treaty with it has been looked upon as the essential law on the subject ever since.

The beaten Gwalior Army took its disbandment quietly enough. From 40,000 men, it was now to be 7,000, while 2,500 were to be enlisted into the new Gwalior contingent which, combined with the old, soon came to be regarded almost as a *corps d'élite* in which service was eagerly sought by British officers, until it too blew up with the Bengal Army, thirteen years later.

A British force remained awhile at Gwalior to see the new status fully established, the remainder of the army marched off to its cantonments, and the Governor-General set off for Calcutta. While he was solving the difficult matter of Gwalior, the extraordinary Press campaign against the inevitable Sind policy, the campaign of the Company's servants against his attempts to get difficult questions settled, and his intolerance of some of the ways of the Civil Service, culminated in his recall

by the Court of Directors, in face of the wishes of the British Government. The strange system remained, whereby Governors-General were appointed by the Crown but could be recalled by the Company!

Lord Ellenborough went home happy in the knowledge that he had put the Gwalior question right, and removed that powerful army from off the British flank when the inevitable Sikh trouble should come. Sir Henry Hardinge, holding the position of Secretary, which we should now call Secretary of State for India *mutatis mutandis*, the famous Peninsula soldier, came out in his place. Lord Ellenborough also knew that he had done well in Sind, but hardly could have realized how he had built so much better than he knew.

Probably Lord Ellenborough's chief offence was that coming out to clean up the Afghan mess, which he did admirably, he had two more wars on his hands, a crime in the then mood of the Court, however, unavoidable.

When a soldier takes over high civil authority, it is a recognized phenomenon that he usually, for fear perhaps of being thought to be imbued with a spirit of military dominance, is found to be astoundingly yielding, even where yielding is the wrong policy. Sir Henry arrived naturally enough, full of the usual good intention to love his enemies, to persuade the wolf and the lamb to lie down together, and generally act as good Viceroys aspire to do. But the lure of the Indus, the inevitable trend of things to come to anchor where the Mogul throne had left them, continued. While Cabinet and Court longed for peace, peace there could not be with the Punjab in anarchy, strive statesmen never so earnestly. The story of this anarchy is so astounding, so dramatic, such an instance of what could happen in the East even in the reign of Queen Victoria, and what can happen again under similar circumstances—as indeed the Simon

Commission has reminded us—that not only is its outline essential to this history, but itself is a drama that is enthralling. To it must also be added the incredible story of the *Punchayats*, the system of military Soviets which prevailed from 1841 to 1845 in the vast army that Runjhit Singh had made; a system which had brought the Gwalior Army to Maharajpore and Punniar, as it was to bring the Sikh Army to Sobraon.

THE PUNJAB AND THE JAMMU BROTHERS

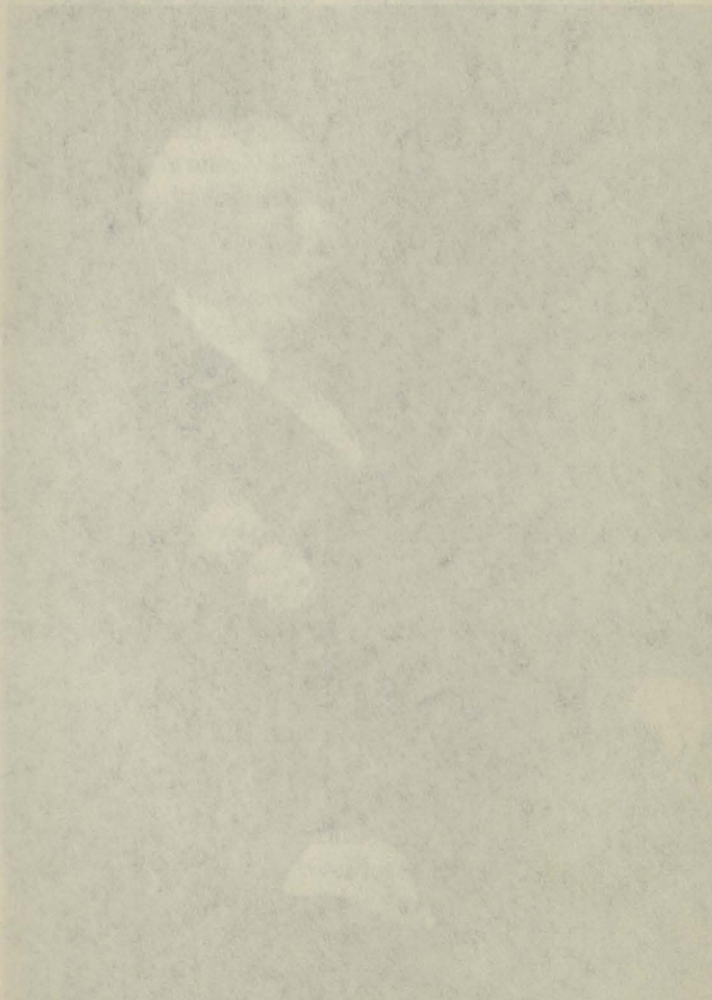
The stormy petrels of Lahore politics, mentioned during the Afghan War, especially Rajah Gulab Singh, were the "Jammu Brothers," Gulab, Dhyan and Suchet Singh, three sons of the Rajput chieftain of Jammu, of the people known as Dogra. Dogra is but a geographical term for the inhabitants of the lower hills between the Punjab and Kashmir. It does not necessarily even apply to Hindus, but to all of these in the *Dugar Des*, or 'country of the two lakes,' but in common parlance is used of the Hindu Rajput clans in those hills. In the Punjab plains, the Rajput clans had become Moslem, in the hills they had been able to remain Hindu. Sikhism had also failed to touch most of the Rajput folk of Punjab hills, and the Dogra therefore remained in the normal Hindu hierarchy. Being Rajput these naturally carried the appellation *Singh* or Lion, which Guru Govind, the "tenth Guru" of Sikhism, had caused his militant followers to assume likewise.

The three brothers had brought their levies into the service of Runjhit Singh and had risen to high office, both military and civil. Gulab Singh we have seen commanding the Sikh troops in the Peshawur Province and Hazara, and being offered the Afghan territory as far as Allahabad, and each and all being concerned without

truth and scruple in intrigues of the time, secure if need be in the fastnesses of the hills from which only a large expedition could dislodge them. There they were also concerned in extending Sikh and incidentally there own dominion to Gilgit and far up into Tibet, where indeed they and the Sikhs had suffered more than one defeat at the hands of the Chinese. In the Anarchy of the Punjab to which we are coming, these three bulk large, and tilt at destiny till at last only the eldest survives and finally emerges in an entirely new rôle, with a great-grandson figuring in the English Law Courts. At the time of Runjhit Singh's death, Dhyan Singh, the second brother, was his Vizier or Prime Minister.

THE ASTOUNDING DEVELOPMENTS AT LAHORE

The situation at Lahore had been getting worse and worse since the death of Runjhit Singh. That monarch, as already mentioned, died during the first year of the Afghan War, that is to say, in June, 1839, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. For many years the daring activity of his youth had been impaired, and he had given himself to strong waters and the wildest debauchery. But he had failed to do the one thing essential to the continuity of a new Eastern dynasty, viz., assure himself of a suitable heir. Despite his large harem and his several wives, the number of sons whom he admitted to be his were few, but the only one whom his public admitted as possible was the Rajah Khurruk Singh. When the old Lion lay dying, nay, some say after his actual demise, he was carried round the army paraded on the field of Mian Mir, Dhyan Singh, the second of the Jammu chiefs, and Vizier of the kingdom, at his side, constantly speaking to the figure in the litter as if taking the orders of his dying master.



FIELD-MARSHAL SIR PATRICK GRANT, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.



FIELD-MARSHAL SIR PATRICK GRANT, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

The "Pat" Grant of Lord Gough's Campaigns. The only man who knew the real story—but all his papers were burnt in a fire.

The death was then announced, coupled with the name of Khurruk Singh as his successor, and Dhyan Singh as Vizier, in accordance with the last instruction of the "Lion." Khurruk Singh was duly installed, a feeble debauchee and almost an imbecile, but cognizant that his position was precarious, and impressed with the belief that the British Agent, Colonel Wade, alone could keep him on his throne.

Sher Singh, another reputed son of the Lion's, had put in a claim to the throne to the Governor-General, Lord Auckland, thus once again illustrating the position in men's minds of the power that sat on the Mogul throne. Lord Auckland had told him that Khurruk Singh was the recognized ruler.

Khurruk Singh, drugged and incompetent though he was, had a promising son, Nao Nihal Singh, who was at Peshawur when the old Maharajah died, but hurried to Lahore to take up, as he hoped, the position of the hand behind the throne, only to find that his father was in the hands of one Cheit Singh. That, however, was easily overcome and the favourite was murdered in the Royal apartments on the 9th of October, 1839. Hating Dhyan Singh and the Dogra influence, nevertheless the young son, in the hope of resisting his father's tendency to listen to the British Agent, coalesced with that party. The various happenings and intrigues of this earlier period are beyond the needs of this book to relate. Suffice it to say that the miserable Khurruk Singh, his death possibly hastened by overdoses of his favourite drug, died on the 5th of November, 1840.

The young Nao Nihal Singh, the natural heir, might have given the Sikh throne an occupant worthy of his grandfather. But the day that dazzled him with a crown also claimed his life. On his way back from his father's funeral pyre, riding under a covered gateway,

the archway fell on him. Riding by his side was a young Dogra noble, son of Gulab Singh the eldest of the Jammu brothers. This lad was killed and Nao Nihal Singh so injured that he died that night. The general opinion of the time inculpated the Jammu Rajahs in the attempt on the life of the young Maharajah who was known to be their enemy, and the death of the young Dogra noble was probably an accidental outcome of the plot.

However that may be, the Minister, Dhyan Singh, now declared that Rajah Sher Singh was the only possible heir to the throne. This was also the opinion of the British, and as Sher Singh was absent from Lahore, Dhyan Singh delayed the announcement of the young prince's death, to give him time to arrive.

A good-natured voluptuary, Sher Singh was far more likely to be in the hands of the scheming Dhyan Singh than the independent lad of twenty just dead. On the other hand no one believed in Sher Singh's paternity nor in that of several other young princes born of Runjhit Singh's known impotency. Sher Singh possessed no outstanding and few popular qualities, and as the nominee of the Jammu brothers, was as odious to the Sikhs generally as they were.

To make the situation easier for all concerned the *Mai Chund Kour*, the late Maharajah's widow, mother of the dead lad, declared herself regent, talked of adopting Heera Singh, Dhyan Singh's son, and then declared that her daughter-in-law, Nao Nihal Singh's widow, was pregnant. For the moment a regency with the Mai at the head was tacitly recognized, the Jammu brothers waiting on events. Sher Singh was to be President of the Council of State and Dhyan Singh, the Vizier.

All this while the Sikh Army was in arrears of pay

and furious with the administration. Promised increased pay and given a donative in Roman fashion by Sher Singh, it besieged and took Lahore, looted the merchants, massacred all it disliked, including an estimable young Englishman named Foukes, in the Sikh service. In the hurly-burly many murderings of Governors by soldiery occurred in other places also. Sher Singh then remained for a while as the *de facto* ruler. All this time the British–Afghan troubles were accumulating, to end in disaster, which shook the Sikh alliance with ourselves although the triumphant finale restored our prestige. Sher Singh's son, Pertab Singh, came with a fine force to visit Lord Ellenborough and take part in the reviews and rejoicings which had signalized the return of the Avenging Army across the Sutlej. It thus seemed for the moment that matters at Lahore would settle down. The British policy was to recognize and support anyone acceptable to the people of the Punjab. Sher Singh's position was also perhaps improved by the slippering to death by her attendants in June, 1842, of the Mai, under circumstances that are obscure.

The powerful chiefs of the Sindanwallah family, the heads of one of the old Sikh Missals or confederacies, had left Lahore hurriedly when Sher Singh came to power. But the latter was advised that their friendship and support was worth gaining, and here again the sinister hand of Dhyan Singh was spoken of. The Sindanwallah chiefs came to town, but there it was hinted to them that they had been invited for their destruction. Ajeet Singh and Lehna Singh, the two leaders, their nerve upset by this diabolical thought, invited the Maharajah and his son to inspect some of their new levies. While he was doing so, Ajeet Singh shot him, and Lehna Singh cut down the boy Prince Pertab Singh. They then joined the Minister Dhyan Singh and proceeded to the city to

select a new king from among a few more of the fictitious offspring of the Lion still remaining in the kingly bag. But the cup of Dhyan Singh and his schemings was full. The Sindanwallah chiefs were going to take no more risks and that afternoon they shot the Minister.

DHULEEP SINGH BROUGHT TO THE NOMINAL THRONE

Unfortunately for themselves they neglected to secure Heera Singh, the brilliant young son of Dhyan Singh, and revenge was still to be piled on tragedy.

He called on the Army to avenge their ruler and his father. The Army attacked the citadel which they entered the second day. Lehna Singh was killed and Ajeet Singh jumped to his death over the steep walls. Heera Singh was then proclaimed Vizier and the little Prince Dhuleep Singh as Maharajah. Vengeance was now wreaked on all who, rightly or wrongly, were considered to have a hand in the murder of the Maharajah and his Minister. And all the while that these scenes were in progress the Governor-General in India had Gwalior on his hands. No wonder that he had, as has been said, his eye over his shoulder on Lahore.

Amid disturbing events of all kinds another star had arisen on the firmament obnoxious to the Army, in Jowahir Singh, the maternal uncle of the little Dhuleep Singh, brother, that is to say, of the Ranee Jindun. Two princelets of the Runjhit Singh paternity were born to him, and acknowledged and adopted, when he was taking Kashmir and Peshawur from the Afghans, and hence called Kashmira Singh and Peshawura Singh, began to press their claims to the throne. The third of the Jammu brothers, Rajah Suchet Singh, now comes into more open notice, in an attempt to secure the Vizier-

ship from his nephew, Heera Singh, in which he advanced to Lahore with a few followers.

By now the *Punchayat* system of the Sikh Army to be described shortly, had come to maturity. The *Punchayats* would have none of Suchet Singh and his attractive promises of donatives. This ambitious Rajput chief found that he had overcalled his hand, and was destroyed, fighting fiercely with a few followers, in a ruined enclosure near the city, after being pounded by heavy Sikh guns.

The young minister, Heera Singh, now appeared to have a new lease of life. Two months after the death of his uncle, another of the Sindanwallah chiefs, Attur Singh, made an attempt to gain over the Army, the Army that by now was " not taking any." Heera Singh now knew its strength, and was wise enough to humble himself before them, thus putting them more than ever on the seats of the master. Attar Singh had been living awhile in British safety, but now in May '44, when the Gwalior trouble was over and the Government of India was watching, the princelet Kashmira Singh joined him. With them was a famous religious zealot, Bhai Bir Singh. After failing to detach the holy man, the troops attacked the would-be minister, and both he and the Prince were killed, while a cannon ball also destroyed the Bhai. Thus Heera Singh triumphed once more, but in modern slang, was not to " get away with it " much longer. The hatred of Jammu, its tribe and all their works was stronger than ever. Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh were gone, the old fox, Gulab Singh, knew the Army and gave it the comether, and he could wait. Heera Singh must go. This upstanding young man had not kept his position of his own intellect and courage alone. Behind him was the sinister figure of the Pundit Jalla, a Brahmin from Jammu and his tutor. The

Pundit apparently dreamed of a Dogra ascendancy in the Punjab and himself as forming a dynasty of hereditary Peishwas, for what Runjhit Singh had done in one way he and his might do in another; Sikhs had no more claim to the Punjab than anyone else; the Rajputs of the plains, though now Moslems, were Rajputs still! It was a fascinating project. He saw that the Army must be paid, and as he had no love for Gulab Singh, he thought that it might very well be kept out of mischief by a march against the actual fastness on the Jammu cliffs.

The Pundit grew still more arrogant, and his subtle instincts failed to warn him. There were rebellions, and he had flouted Jowahir Singh, the Ranee's brother, putting into power one Lal Singh, a Jammu Brahmin who had "gained a disgraceful influence over the impure mind of Ranee Jindun." The Pundit had also overstepped himself in his treatment of the Ranee and her brother. The two appealed as one Sikh to another, to the Army, which was also being stirred by the proscribed Sikh chiefs.

Such situations do not last. One winter's day, the 21st of December, Heera Singh and his *perohit*, his family priest, saw that the game was over and fled towards Jammu with certain other Dogra sirdars. Before they could reach the Tawi River, which Jammu overhangs, they were overtaken and slain. The memory of the Pundit received no mercy, that of Heera Singh was not unmourned, for he had well avenged his father and had been a minister of presence and dignity.

Peshawura Singh, the only other prince of the titular blood, had no claim to put forward, and it was Jowahir Singh and the Ranee's paramour who alone could form an administration. The Army made them its puppets, and went steadily forward to its Waterloo. All the while the scenes in Lahore increased in scandal and

indecency. It now pleased the Army to march against Jammu, as the Pundit had planned in his hatred of Gulab Singh, but that old fox was too wary for his masters. Buying the goodwill of at least two brigades he came into their camp and marched with them to Lahore in the hope of becoming Vizier, but seeing that opinion was not yet ripe, he acquiesced in the Viziership of Jowahir Singh and paid a fine of close on seven lakhs of rupees. Jowahir Singh soon found that his bed was more thorny than even he had dreamed of. The Army had clipped the wings of Gulab Singh, and had sent him back to his hills with his tail ostensibly trailing on the ground, so that all might see how thoroughly he had wished to submit himself.

The new minister had some grudges to work off. The officer commanding a division of the Army who had brought him back when he had essayed to fly to British India was specially obnoxious and Jowahir Singh had him arrested and cut off his nose and ears. That was unwise, for the Army was jealous of its own prerogatives, but it waited awhile.

The distant Province of Mooltan, wrested from the Afghans in 1820, was giving trouble. The Governor was one Diwan Moolraj, son of the late Diwan, and he ruled his province with a strong hand. But he was not disposed to pay the revenue that was thought suitable, and it was likely that the Army would move against him. While this trouble was augmenting, Peshawura Singh, encouraged by Gulab Singh, who was watching affairs from the safety of his hills, tried to get a party to support him in his own fief of Sialkot, failed, and wandered north. Suddenly obtaining a little support, he succeeded in seizing the fort of Attock on the Indus and proclaimed himself Maharajah. The Army had a sentimental affection for anyone that the old Lion had

admitted as a son, but were not prepared to back him to such an extent. Troops moved against Attock, the Prince saw how futile was his action, and surrendered, and was secretly put to death by the minister. That for reasons of sentiment was not well received, but again the Army bided its time. The little Maharajah in Lahore with his disreputable mother now alone remained of the spacious coverture of Runjhit Singh.

It was now the summer of 1845, and we have reached the year when the Punjab could no longer hold together against the forces of disruption, and when the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were galloping on the horizon. And all the while this masterless, almost unconscious Army was making ready like the Gadarene swine for the devils that were to drive them into the sea.

Before looking on the last scene, the Sikh Army and its astounding *Punchayat* system referred to, must be thrown on the screen. It is so remarkable as to be almost incredible.

THE SIKH ARMY AND ITS SOVIETS

It is not hard to realize that the loyalty of no army could bear up against the collapse of authority and moral worth that was so scandalous at Lahore. The Sikh Army was more than proud of itself, and the Sikh portion thereof was concerned for the Khalsa, the elect, the Sikh union and brotherhood, and the legacy that the tenth Guru had left them. To save itself it evolved the Soviet system about to be described, this modern Russian phrase giving the sense thereof with some precision.

At the time of Runjhit Singh's death the total forces were estimated to be some 130,000 men, of whom 37,000 were regulars duly regimented, into 30 battalions,

numbering 27,000 men, 7 regular cavalry corps and some 4000 artillerymen with 300 guns. It is here to be remarked that Indian Artillerymen have always given way to the psychological and hypnotic influence of the cannon, that influence which Zola shows so graphically in his *Débâcle.* Therein, with the crumbling French Army retreating from Worth, the gun demands the service and discipline which keeps its servants staunch. Every Indian war has brought out the same, and in India, gun-founding and good artillerymen, there have always been. Runjhit Singh's guns were largely cast under British supervision and his artillery often trained by men of the Bengal Artillery, whether ex-officer, European deserter or enrolled pensioner. The result was good so far as service of the guns went and the will to die at their side. Equipment and mobility was another matter.

The remainder of the troops were the Rajput armies of the Dogra chiefs of Jammu and elsewhere, feudal militia battalions, and the famous Sikh *Gorcherras* or irregular cavalry, with a reputation for swordsmanship. About 60 per cent of this force were actually Sikhs, the dominant factor in the Muhammadan Punjab, the remainder Muhammadans, and some Hindustanis, with several Gurkha corps. The latter were dressed in chakos and green jackets like the British Gurkha rifle corps. Indeed, all the Regular Army were dressed like the Company's Army, save that the cross-belts were black instead of white, and pugarees were worn and not caps or chakos.

Mention has been made of the Europeans of all ranks in the Army, and of the French Generals Allard and Ventura, and the Italian Avitabile, all of whom had trained brigades that bore the name. In 1844 the Army had turned on its Europeans, many of whom were

murdered and the others made their escape to British India.

As in all Asiatic armies, regular pay was the trouble, and with the collapse of efficient Government the Army was sadly in arrears. Some of their pay, too, was sticking to the hands of the *Bakshi*, the Paymaster-General and his myrmidons, and the Army had conceived a great hate against its War Office. Had it been paid, it might have remained subordinate to the Sikh Durbar, however much the members of that body might murder each other. A *de facto* Vizier with a *de facto Bakshi* who could deliver the goods, was what they wanted and little more, but the Khalsa must not be brought into disrepute or to humiliation.

During the last and feebler years of their master's life, there had been many excitements and lesser mutinies, owing largely to this failure of administration, but during the years after his death, despite the deaths of two Maharajahs and the murders of high personages, it had but remained brooding. It was not till Sher Singh's *coup d'état* that it really broke loose in the revolting scenes of murder and cruelty in Lahore in 1841 that have been briefly described. In its capture of Lahore Fort the stormers, bereft of proper leadership, suffered appalling losses, and this convinced the saner of its officers that since there was no one else some control must be established by themselves.

The soldiery being largely recruited from the peasantry of the Punjab, they had as a model, the old village elder and *Punchayat* system which had come down from antiquity, which had survived in the Punjab more than elsewhere, and which had alone kept the country together when generations of anarchy had swept over the land.

In October 1843 the British political agent who lived

at and worked from Ludhiana, thus described it: "At present the discipline and training of the Lahore Army is carried on by the Commandants and Adjutants acting under the orders of the soldiers' councils, composed of men from each unit. Their mutual relations and those as component parts of the Khalsa, are determined by those bodies acting in concert, and they virtually form the governing power in the State. The same system has extended to the *gorcheras* (the irregular and feudal horse), who are in regular correspondence with and act under the orders of the Infantry as the most powerful body."

In January 1845 he still further explained the system. "The officers of the Lahore Army have very different functions to those of any other army. They command on parade and lead in action, but can neither reward or punish or keep the accounts. They act under the *Punchayats*, composed of two men elected from each company. These bodies or sometimes the whole regiment in council decide upon all matters and only by their consent can punishment be awarded. All disputes between soldiers and civilians are brought before this tribunal for decision."

It was not likely that the Europeans with the Sikh Army would accept this situation, and hence, no doubt, their murder or hasty departures. The majority of the regimental officers had come up from the ranks and were generally illiterate and accepted the situation readily enough.

A letter from the Punjab in March 1845 further explains this anomaly. "There exists a singular species of military order in this anarchy, this being maintained by the *Punchayats* appointed by the troops, consisting of two men from each troop, battery or company. Except in moments of disorder, these men use the language and

demeanour of subordinates, though they substantially command. They professedly require a leader, declaring that without order and subordination both Army and State must perish. Neither have they yet shown any desire to give the supreme command to any one man of their own body. Though their late excesses in the hills, especially in the matter of women, were very great, they maintain sufficient order to have regular bazaars, grain dealers and other suppliers in the lines and camps, all of whose property is scrupulously respected. This appearance of order within disorder, in which, though the officers are looked upon more as subordinates, their orders are still strictly obeyed when carrying out those of the *Punchayats*, is apt to perplex Europeans. But it is the lowest that will prevent the dissolution of the Army. The instincts of self-preservation and the habit of self-government acquired by the land-owning peasantry in their villages, from which the organization is copied, binds these regiments together for their mutual interest, in a manner surprising to those not acquainted with Indian agricultural society."

Now between 1843, when the Soviet *Punchayats*—and how correctly the word " soviet " may be used is now apparent—had completed the system, and 1845, this army had come to complete power, raising and destroying ministers, ravishing cities, carrying out executions ; complete power, in fact, with no responsibility. Is it to be wondered at that ministers, self-seekers, queens and paymasters all looked to what had been done at Gwalior, when an army grasping power had been sent to the right about, and the old regime, purged and cleaned, it is true, but the old regime in essence, was set up again. Would the British Government clean up this Punjab mess for them too ?

Incidentally, nothing enraged the Army more than the

allegation against any minister that he favoured obtaining support from British India.

On the other hand, as we shall see, the British wanted nothing less than to have to interfere. Gwalior was within their system, the Punjab appeared to be without. The word appeared is used, for the Mogul confines were the natural ones and he who ruled at Delhi must inevitably come to the Indus, if not beyond. The " Lure " of that line was unavoidable. No one saw this more clearly than the old Lion himself. " Some day this map will all be red," he had remarked, and behind it lay for the Sikh that prophecy of their dying Guru at Delhi, dying to make a Moslem holiday, that curse on the Mogul " that some day white men in helmets " would take the rule from them.

But the ignorant peasant of the Army was told that Great Britain and the Governor-General were intriguing all day to take the Punjab. Before, however, we can see this drama ringing to evensong, we must look on the greatest spectacle of all, that of the Army settling its account with Jowahir Singh, the Prime Minister of the Sikh State, which was really Moslem.

THE EXECUTION OF THE VIZIER BY THE ARMY

To the British-Indian Army the great Plain of Mian Mir is well known as principal cantonment in the Punjab proper. It is named after the Saint Mian Mir, whose shrine still stands in one corner thereof. In the middle of the plain stands the European and Indian barracks, and before them there stood also, the hutments of Gulab Singh, Brigadier of the Sikh Army and the artillery. The remainder, so far as the Lahore garrison went, was camped on the Champs de Mars outside the old Mogul fortress at the opposite side of the city, as also at

Anarkali, Begumpura, and other cantonments round the capital.

Early on the 24th September, 1845, there were marching from all these camps and cantonments, the various brigades of the Sikh Army to join the troops at Mian Mir. There, too, were assembling the famous regular brigades of Avitabile Court and Ventura, the foreign generals who had originally trained them, the brigade of Gulab Singh, the *Gorcheras* from the camp at Shadera by the tomb of the Emperor Jehangir, and all the artillery in their English horse-artillery jackets, who were stationed on the Plain.

Was the Maharajah to have a treat by reviewing his soldiers ? Was the Army parading to march against a common enemy ? In a sense, yes ! The common enemy was the Minister, Jowahir Singh, whose cup was full to the brim. They were there to witness his solemn execution conformably to a sentence passed by the only real authority in the Punjab, the Soviet-General of the Army ; and this is the story of it.

Five days before, the Minister had been summoned before the *Punchayats* to answer a series of charges, remarkable in themselves, still more so when presented by an Army in good standing to the principal Minister of the State who paid them, brother of the regent Queen, uncle of the King.

These were the charges :—

1. Misappropriation of State funds to his private use.
2. Maladministration of the State.
3. Treacherously murdering in his cell at Attock, Kunwar Peshawura Singh, son of Runjhit Singh, after the latter had surrendered on terms.
4. Mutilating in private revenge General Jodha Ram, Commander of the Avitabile brigade.

5. Disobeying the order of the Khalsa Army to consult them in all important matters of State.
6. Neglecting to increase the pay of the soldiers.
7. Refusing to pay the 6000 soldiers concerned in the capture of Rajah Gulab Singh of Jammu the reward of Rs 100 each.
8. Attempting to embroil the State with the English with a view to the destruction of the Army.

As the Vizier did not reply, he was summoned to appear in person to do so, failing which he would be sentenced in default. There was only one way of escape, and that was to get to the English, taking with him the Queen and the Maharajah. Ferozepore was not far to go, but the troops were fully aware of what he was likely to do, and all routes were watched and blocked. He then took refuge in the great fort in which were three battalions raised for his own service and protection.[1] In addition to these troops there was also artillery outside, over whom the Minister essayed to have influence, dispersing a lakh of rupees in largess in the hope of securing their loyalty.

From his post in the fort he was man enough to send a defiant answer to the *Punchayats*. Thereon the latter took formal control of the State, in the name of the Khalsa Punth, informed the Vizier that he had been condemned to death, and that if he did not present himself at Mian Mir next morning the fort would be stormed and all within put to the sword.

The unfortunate Vizier, who was but reaping as he had sown, made one more attempt to escape. He distributed 50,000 more rupees to the troops in the fort

[1] By Colonel Gardiner, an adventurer at the Sikh Court, whose adventurous life has been told by Colonel Pearse from Gardiner's own memoirs. Considerable doubt has been cast on his story of his own origin.

who let him move outwards. The guards at the outer gate, however, held responsible by the Khalsa that he did not get away, refused him egress. Next day came orders that four battalions and a battery were being sent to fetch him to Mian Mir. Hearing this, all the troops in the fort marched away to the Plain to join their comrades. The game was up, the last hour had come; and the Vizier braced himself to face it.

Taking with him the Ranee, the Maharajah, now twelve years of age, on two elephants, accompanied by the Ranee's attendants on two more, and escorted by fifty faithful horsemen, Jowahir Singh set forth. With him he took also treasure and jewels in case one more turn of fate might show him a way out.

On the Plain the whole Army was drawn up rank on rank, brigade by brigade, three deep, after the French fashion, in admirable order. They had been on the ground for many hours and had been expecting the Vizier since noon.

Here is the scene as told by eye-witnesses. Half-way from the fort to Mian Mir the four battalions and the battery who were coming to escort the Vizier, met the cavalcade and in perfect silence turned back with it. It was half-past three when the cavalcade reached the right of the line, where the drums beat and the brigade of Ventura presented arms. The *Gorcheras*, whose usual post would have been behind the regular troops, were in line facing them. As the cavalcade came forward the escorting battalions formed up on one side of the oblong, and the artillery wheeled up to furnish the other. The Vizier's cavalcade was thus enclosed and all escape barred. The cavalcade now reached the centre of the line, the Vizier sitting on the leading elephant with the little Dhuleep Singh on his lap. At this moment two companies of infantry stepped forward. One cut off the

leading elephant, the other took the three elephants with the frightened women, who commenced to scream, to tents which had been prepared for them behind the line.

The mahout driving the Vizier's elephant was ordered to halt and make his beast kneel, but this the Vizier counter-ordered. A Sikh soldier put a bullet in his shoulder, whereon the mahout did as he was told. A gigantic Sikh then unfixed his bayonet, climbed into the howdah and, drawing the boy away from Jowahir Singh, handed him over the side, where he was carried to the Ranee who was now shrieking to all and sundry to save her brother.

The lines stood to attention. Not a soul moved or a face unbent. The Will of the Khalsa held everyone in its grip. Up in the howdah the Sikh, freed of the boy, slew the Vizier's attendant. Then in stentorian voice he proclaimed the sentence of the Khalsa Punth, stabbed the wretched Minister in throat and chest and threw the body down before the serried ranks below him.

The tense silence was over, the bonds of military order snapped and hell broke loose. The troops rushed from their ranks and fell on the unfortunate escort, of whom but two escaped to tell the tale to the British Agent at Ferozepore.

The mutilated body of Jowahir Singh lay all night outside the tent on the Plain, within which the unfortunate Ranee stamped and raved in her rage and terror.

Next morning she was allowed to take the body to the Fort, where it was cremated the same evening, with four screaming widows, who went to the pyre amid the jeers and insults of the soldiery, a scene which all who saw it never forgot, a scene in which ruth had no part whatever.

It is said that since the Anarchy began forty-two

widows of its victims had thus been burnt, and that on this occasion the jeering troops formed a long line to scoff at the frightened wretches who normally would be the objects of the greatest reverence. Their jewels were wrenched from them, and from one the gold-fringed trouser-band was torn. As the oil-soaked mats were drawn over the living victims this one rose from the pyre and cursed them all, saying that in one year the Army and the Khalsa would cease to exist, and that widows would be as common as flies.

That was the end of that sad story, though of the Minister it has been said with Shakespeare, there were none so poor to do him reverence.

In less than three months the Army marched to its doom across the Sutlej.

CHAPTER VII

THE SIKHS CROSS THE SUTLEJ

THE SITUATION ON THE BRITISH SIDE OF THE SUTLEJ

IT has been explained how on the hither side of the River Sutlej the territory was largely that of the protected Sikh states,[1] and that contact with the Lahore Government only took place at Ludhiana, and at, and about Ferozepore which had been made a cantonment at the time of the Afghan wars. The British Agent dealing with Sikh affairs, for the most part dwelt at Ludhiana, but of late years often came to Ferozepore, which was nearer Lahore. A remarkable series of men had been in charge of British relations with the Sikhs. During, and indeed before the Afghan War, there had been Captain Wade, on whose advice Runjhit Singh used to place great importance, but who was looked on as hostile by the latter Sikh administration. Mr. Clerk, who succeeded, knew the Sikhs thoroughly, and understood their point of view, and when he went as Lieutenant-Governor to what was then the North-West Provinces at Agra, after a short period of Colonel Richmond, Lord Ellenborough in 1843 appointed Major Broadfoot, one of the most distinguished of the defenders of Jalalabad. It was Broadfoot who was in charge during the last anxious years of the Punjab Anarchy. Constant were the letters from him to the Governor-

[1] Runjhit Singh had territories in Sutlej, but was not allowed to have any troops there, and they were little more than " estates."

General and the Foreign Secretary, keeping them wise of all that was going forward. All were fully appraised of the possibility, nay, probability, of a Sikh invasion, whether a genuine national uprising, or the result of the intrigue to which indeed the charges against Jowahir Singh referred, of stirring up the Army's enmity against the British to encompass its undoing. As will be seen, the Army, though advised of this point of view, did so succeed in working itself up that it fell into the trap; if trap there was.

For many reasons the Sikhs and the Army generally did believe that the British had designs on the Punjab. Their leaders, however, knew otherwise, and were perfectly well aware that unless the Sikhs themselves performed some overt act of hostility which could not be mistaken, they were in no danger whatever. As has already been explained, the Sikh Army was supremely intolerant of any of their chiefs who showed British affinities.

The situation was therefore a difficult one. The British were obviously right in strengthening their garrisons. But all such actions in times of tension, such as precautionary mobilizations, the ordering of new warships, and the like, however necessary they may be, only tend to make a difficult position more tense.

The action that the British now took was not outwardly very obvious, all that was essential having been done before. In 1809, when the apprehension caused by the French pretensions had subsided, the force advanced to Ludhiana was to have been withdrawn to the Jumna, and Runjhit Singh was so informed. Other councils, however, prevailed, and Ludhiana became our most advanced station, with, however, only two battalions. Subsequently to this a local battalion of Gurkhas at Subathu after the end of the Nepal War in 1816, was left to guard the frontier hills, and that was the end of

it. The troops that were to watch for Afghan inroads were far down country, at Meerut, and later at Kurnal as well.

Up till 1838, indeed, the Ludhiana force remained the only troops directly facing the Sikhs. In 1835 the country round Ferozepore belonging to an escheated Sikh chieftain was taken over by the British to prevent Runjhit Singh seizing it, and then, as related, the temporary camp of 1838 remained when the Afghan War took on its disastrous aspect.

Kurnal proved of more recent years, probably from the coming of canal water, profoundly unhealthy, and it was advanced to Amballa in 1842, owing to the necessity of supporting Ferozepore and Ludhiana. At the same time, for reasons of health, the desire was conceived and carried out of making the Simla hills a colony for European troops and invalids, and British barracks were erected at Kasauli, Dagshai and Subathu, the Gurkhas being advanced to Simla to keep order in the hills. All these measures were entirely proper, and unprovocative to well-informed men. But the Sikh Army who had now seen their possible ally of Gwalior so promptly dealt with, became more suspicious than ever.

The Earl of Ellenborough was succeeded in July 1844 by Sir Henry Hardinge, who as an experienced soldier was fully aware of the military dangers of the situation. He immediately concerned himself still further with improving the availability and readiness of the Army that could be directed towards the Sikh frontier, but he also realized ere long that in the temper and strange position of the Sikh Army, precautions that would make a normal neighbour think twice would but make the danger worse. For this reason he delayed many essential military measures.

The Indian system of carriage and supply, its simplicity

and its unreadiness, has been explained. Another defect of the system was that the collection of carriage from a district was soon bruited over the country-side, and made secrecy of preparation almost impossible.

The situation in September, 1845, at Lahore has just been described. The Sikh Army had assumed the Government of the State, and it gave orders to the Minister that in future no communications were to be sent to the British Agent save by their order or with their approval.

In the anxious months succeeding the execution of Jowahir Singh, it has been said that Major Broadfoot's actions were provocative. But he had considerable experience of the Sikhs in an exalted mood. He had been compelled to take strong measures against them, then our allies, when marching through the Punjab in the early days of the Afghan War. He had seen the supreme arrogance with which both Sikh commanders and troops had behaved after the disasters in Afghanistan, and he knew their vexatious and futile behaviour when ordered to accompany the avenging army into the Khaiber. It is not unreasonable therefore to believe that he was not prepared to suffer lightly any fresh cases of arrogance. Nevertheless, he knew how undesirable it was considered to have war if war could be avoided, or if there was any sign of permanency and peace at Lahore.

And so matters went on with intense vigilance on our side, and the Sikh Army directing affairs in a considerable state of nerves, with a futile nominal minister, Lal Singh, and a Sikh chief, Tej Singh, nominally in command of the army as the military mouthpiece of the *Punchayats*.

The new Governor-General began to move up country in September to get in touch with the Commander-in-Chief, and with his Agent on the frontier. Shortly after his arrival he had circulated a minute to his Council,



THE FIRST SIKH WAR

Battle of Ferozeshuhr, December 21st–22nd, 1845. The attack on the Sikh camp at dawn, after the terrible bivouac on the field.

saying that " To carry the pacific policy of the Government of India into effect, we have been content to suffer great inconvenience, considerable expense, and some risk, necessarily caused by the presence of a large disorganized Sikh force on the frontier . . . we have never abandoned the expectation . . . that some man of superior capacity and master mind might appear among them able to control this mutinous army, and so reconstruct a strong Sikh Government."

Writing to the Secret Committee in London on the 30th September, 1845, His Excellency put the same story before them.

" The forbearance of the Government of India has been carried to an extent beyond that which is customary . . . advice and warnings have been conveyed to the Lahore Government in the plainest terms . . . our desire to see the Maharajah's Government re-established on a basis of independence and strength is well known to the most influential and leading chiefs. . . . I shall persevere in the direct course of endeavouring by moderation, good faith and friendly advice to avert the necessity of British interference by force of arms in the affairs of the Punjab."

But there were no leading chiefs that could ride the storm, and the Army was in the saddle beyond any control!

THE BRITISH-INDIAN ARMY ON THE FRONTIER

Now that the Gwalior trouble was over it was possible to increase the troops in the upper provinces, and Sir Henry and Sir Hugh Gough had at their disposal some 32,000 men in Amballa and beyond with 68 guns, and another 10,000 with more guns at Meerut.

Amballa, where the main bulk was camped and

cantoned, however, was 80 miles from the frontier at Ludhiana, and 160 from Ferozepore. Nevertheless to avoid precipitating matters it was decided at the beginning of December to make no forward moves, even to counter-marching the 9th Lancers who had started from Meerut. Carriage and supplies had been ordered for two-thirds of the force, though that did not necessarily mean, as we know too well by modern experience, that that amount fit for work had been provided.

The total force available, excluding that at Meerut, stationed at Ferozepore, Ludhiana, in the Simla Hills and at Amballa was :

Artillery	7 troops Horse Artillery. 6 companies Foot Artillery. 4 Light field batteries.
Cavalry	2 Regiments British Cavalry. 3 „ Native Light Cavalry. 2 „ Irregular Cavalry.
Infantry	5 Battalions European Infantry. 13 Regiments Indian Infantry.

The troops available were roughly grouped into three cavalry brigades, and four infantry divisions, the latter of only two infantry brigades, each brigade as a rule having only three regiments or battalions. These formation, however, did not exist until the order of battle was promulgated, and brigadiers and staffs improvised. When we see the first move made, it will be seen that the Governor-General's reluctance to increase excitement by the marching of troops—there were no railways as yet in India—resulted in the formations fighting without all their component parts. The actual distribution is of interest as emphasizing this point. The troops at Ferozepore and Ludhiana alone were already formed into brigades.

At Ferozepore under General Littler.	2 troops Horse Artillery.
	2 Light field batteries.
	2 Native Cavalry regiments.
	1 European and 7 Native battalions. } 2 brigades and 2 battalions of the garrison.
At Ludhiana, Brigadier Wheeler. 5,000 men.	2 troops Horse Artillery.
	1 European and 5 Native battalions.
	1 Regiment Irregular Cavalry.
At Amballa, where Major-General Sir Walter Gilbert commanded.	2 troops Horse Artillery.
	1 European and 3 Native Cavalry regiments.
	3 European and 5 Native battalions.
In the Simla Hills.	2 European battalions.
	1 Gurkha battalion.
At Meerut.	2 troops Horse Artillery.
	2 European and 1 Indian Cavalry regiment.
	1 European and 4 Native battalions.
At Dehra Dun.	1 Gurkha battalion.

Further down the Doab, at Cawnpore and elsewhere, were also to be collected, if need be :

1 more troop Horse Artillery.
4 companies of Foot Artillery.
4 Native Cavalry and 5 Native Infantry Corps.

Despite the Governor-General's pacific delays in concentration and despite the reassuring view that he had written to London, the sand in the hour-glass was fast running out.

At the end of November, Major Broadfoot had sent the

fullest details of the distribution of the Sikh Army, now divided into seven divisions of from 7,000 to 10,000 regulars. Four were to move to the Sutlej at Rupar, Ludhiana, Harike and opposite Ferozepore, the remainder being at Attock, Peshawur and Lahore, with another force on the borders of Sind.

THE SIKHS CROSS THE SUTLEJ

Thus the Fourth War, the Sutlej Campaign, also known as the First Sikh War, was now about to commence. Sir Henry Hardinge's forbearance has been described, and how his desire to avoid, as much as possible, movements that might be used to influence the Sikh Army, had to some extent placed him at a disadvantage, and the Sikhs could cross the frontier unmolested.

On the 11th December, this they did at the Ford of Harike, or *Harike ki Pattan,* fifty miles south of Lahore, and about ten miles above Ferozepore. We find for the reasons explained, Sir Henry Hardinge a Peninsular veteran, a Staff Officer at the Horse Guards, and a Lieutenant-General, somewhat caught, as a soldier of his knowledge should not have been caught. We have seen how he had himself written to the Court of Directors so recently as the 4th December that he did not think that what the British Atkins called " them Saiks " would cross the Sutlej. We also find him writing to young Major Broadfoot, C.B., words of wisdom, to the effect that " soldiers like you and I must be specially careful, lest we be accused of inciting war."[1]

So, however it came about, the mass of the British force

[1] " We must show that military men in the conduct of affairs usually transacted by civil officers, on which peace or war hangs by a slender thread, can be trusted for their prudence as safely as those who, in the event of war, would have no military reputations to gratify."

immediately available was at Amballa. So threatening, however, had the signs from the Sutlej become, that on December 8th, the Governor-General instructed Sir Hugh Gough that he was to march via Ludhiana to the reinforcement of Sir John Littler at Ferozepore on the 11th. Sir Hugh Gough in the ordinary course of that hospitality, which the Commander-in-Chief in India is always offering to the Army, gave a Ball on the 10th December to all the officers of the corps and civil officials. It was a brilliant full-dress spectacle—as brilliant as such scenes always are—and those in the know must have thought of that other brilliant spectacle in Brussels thirty years earlier at which some indeed, certainly the Governor-General, must have been present.

Next morning—and many must have gone to their regimental parades direct from the scene in the early grey—the force set forth, to the most desperate campaign that the British Army in India had yet seen, to be fought, too, with the poorest Indian Army that had yet taken the field, so far as its Native units were concerned.

As they marched on the eighty miles of unmetalled track to Ludhiana, came the news that "all the blue pugarees were over the border," and it made the thousand pairs of feet in those strong battalions lift to the lilt of fife and drum more heartily. To Atkins war is always war, and "them Saiks" a bugbear, while Jack Sepoy, as he saw the guns of the Bengal Horse Artillery bounding over the tussocks of the plain, and saw the bullock trains in the heavier guns, imagined that they would blow a hole through the Sikh line through which he might march with shouldered arms.

THE BRITISH ORDER OF BATTLE

With the order to march, the order of battle became effective, though the formations were not completed by the moving up of out-station troops for several days.

Cavalry Division.

1st Brigade. (At Ferozepore.)	Brigadier Harriett.	3rd Irregulars. 8th Lt. Cavalry.
2nd Brigade.	Brigadier Gough.	5th Lt. Cavalry. Bodyguard.
3rd Brigade.	Brigadier White.	3rd Lt. Dragoons. 4th Lt. Cavalry.

1st Division.

Major-General Sir Harry Smith.		31st Foot.
18th Brigade.	Brigadier Hicks.	24th N.I. 47th N.I.
20th Brigade.	Brigadier Ryan.	50th Foot. 42nd N.I. 40th N.I.

2nd Division.

Major-General Sir W. Gilbert.		29th Foot.
1st Brigade.	Brigadier Tyler.	50th Foot. 41st N.I.
2nd Brigade.	Brigadier McLaren.	1st European L.I. 16th N.I. 45th N.I.

Major-General Littler's Division (at Ferozepore, as well as Harriett's Cavalry Brigade).	1st Brigade. Brigadier Reed.	62nd Foot. 12th N.I. 14th N.I.
	20th Brigade. Brigadier Ashburnham.	33rd N.I. 44th N.I. 54th N.I.

1½ Light Field Batteries.

THE BRITISH-INDIAN ARMY OF 1845

The news that the Sikhs were across the border was greeted as has been related with enthusiasm by the marching columns as they swung up the road to Ludhiana. The British officers of the Army had no great opinion of the fighting powers of the Sikh forces, and had imagined that the recent troubles at Lahore, of which of course every mouth was full, had destroyed much of the fighting they may have had.

It was not to be wondered at so far as their experience went. During the Afghan War the Sikhs had failed as allies, and had been singularly reluctant to enter the hills and tackle the Afghans on their own terrain. It was not without difficulty that Lawrence had got them to Kabul in the wake of Pollock's successful march. Thus the Army did not expect as hard a job as had, to their surprise, faced them at Maharajpore, though there were some who knew better. But there were then no Sikhs in the British Army, the Afghan regulars had always been worthless, and the Sikhs with their wild appearance were not much better. The reviews at Ferozepore, where large Sikh Armies had twice been gathered with the British, had not appealed to our neat, well-drilled troops. The astounding psychological bond that the *Punchayat* system had in some strange way produced, was beyond the ken of most folk.

The marches to the frontier were trying ones by reason of the dust. There were no roads in India, and the tracks to the Punjab were over light, friable soil that tore itself into clouds under the gun-wheels and the tramp of men and horses.

The huge masses of transport of an Indian Army that Lord Ellenborough had remarked on to the Duke of Wellington, were as bad as ever. No master spirit had as

yet arisen in our armies to say "No!" Where messes and individuals hired their own carriage and brought what they liked, the scene may be imagined. The follower system of the Mogul Armies which had been described, was still at its height in the Indian Army, despite the warnings of Kabul. It had one distinct advantage, responsible probably for its origin in a country where the lesser human flesh was held cheap; there were no non-combatant "duties" for the rank and file. If a British battalion went into the field as they often did, over a thousand strong, those men were in the ranks as fighting men—no cooks, transport-drivers, sick orderlies, stretcher-bearers, these duties were done by the "followers" and there was something of the old romance of knight and men-at-arms about it. Because the Irish noblemen in the ranks of the Bengal Artillery did not, in peace time, even saddle the horses, but stepped fully accoutred on to their backs from the high plinths of their barrack verandahs, they were neither to hold nor to bind. They faced eastern troops with supreme contempt, galloping in closer and closer to be able to hit the great belching heavy metal as we shall see them doing shortly.

But the Army, unknown to itself, was going to face the finest troops and the stoutest hearts it had yet met in India, and it thought otherwise. It was to go through a supreme trial of which 75 per cent was to fall on the British units, the inevitable spear-head and make-weight, which was to be used unsparingly whenever anything desperate was to be done, or the folly of their masters to be hidden.

It will not be out of place to take stock of this British-Indian Army as it was on the eve of Moodkee and Ferozeshah. The whole Army was looking magnificent. The ravages of war in dress and equipment had been

replaced, the ranks of the British troops were refilled with stout lads from the English shires, and the Company's Europeans largely with the surplus lads of the Emerald Isles, as the memorials to the dead on the battlefields clearly show. H.M. Corps were full of discipline of the older kind, and where the regiments were good, which all were not, they were the finest and most chivalrous fighting machines in the world. Welfare and uplift has always been the clue to life in the good corps, and the corps of the Line were far more advanced in the matter of citizenship than the class from which they were drawn. The Company's Artillery was also *magnifique* with a loose discipline peculiarly its own. Unfortunately it drank, as did its opposite numbers in civil life, and here we may remember that as a people are, so are its armies, but the British Army was always ahead of theirs. Even the stories of floggings are gravely exaggerated. The good corps of this period never sent the men to the triangles, the bad corps had to. But the old evil still remained that a rum issue was a reward, and unfortunately a topical film, shown in the Year of Grace 1933, still assumes that rum is the life of the Navy, instead of its joke. Neither soldier nor sailor wants it now, or only a few. But for a queasy inside after a bad night at sea, or in wet trenches with an attack due at dawn, it is the finest medicine in the world. Medicine and pleasure should not be confused. In the Bengal Artillery it was, although rarely to the detriment of duty. Apart from its hard drinkers, there were also in the ranks of that corps, men of remarkable education and attainments, some of whom left the corps to come to fame and wealth.

The British Army went to the Sutlej as they had to Afghanistan and to Gwalior, in their full dress, but the officers in frock coats. Some regiments wore the shakoe

with cap cover, some the high-peaked forage cap, also with cover. The weather was bitterly cold and raw o' nights and in the early morning, and unless the breeze failed, magnificent by day. Without breeze and with a higher wet bulb, the sun would be strong enough.

There was little horsed field artillery in India, for the reason that the great New South Wales-bred English horse was not yet available, and artillery draught horses were very hard to come by, Persia, Afghanistan and the Cape being skimmed for the purpose of the Horse Artillery. For this reason most even of the light field batteries had bullock draft, and the number of Troops of Horse Artillery with their light six-pounder guns was large.[1] It was the only mobile artillery save the very few horsed light field batteries referred to.

The troops of Bengal Horse Artillery seemed always to wear, come heat come cold, their great brass helmets with tiger-skin roll and crimson horse-hair mane, for no battle picture ever fails to show it, with dress jacket, white leathers and Napoleon boots. Let us now turn to the "Jacks," the term in which in those days British officers affectionately referred to their men. On parade they, too, made a magnificent spectacle, dressed like the British Line, white cross-belts over scarlet coatee, black shakoe often with white drill cover. It is sometimes said that they looked like monkeys in this travesty of the British soldier. Nothing could be more untrue, for the sepoy of these days was largely drawn from the sturdy peasantry of Oudh and Behar, men of family and caste, who stood up well to the measure stick and the yard tape. The older men had curled whiskers and fierce moustachios, and they were a swaggering lot of hidalgos as well as very simple folk in other respects. In spite of what has been said to the contrary they had

[1] Some changed to nine-pounders for this campaign.



THE THIRD LIGHT DRAGOONS, "LIKE A LAMBENT FLAME," AT FEROZESHUHR

done well in Afghanistan, till badly handled and weathered. But there had been many casualties of wounds and sickness, and in war-time it is a well-known and not unnatural phenomenon that recruiting in India falls off, and that to fill the ranks men of inferior class and physique must be taken.

The men in the ranks, despite their brave new coats, were not what they had been. Then, again, the *ikbal*, the god-granted destiny of the Sirkar had undoubtedly been dimmed. It was shown possible to put it to ignominy, a bad knowledge to get about, for many reasons. Further, the Sikhs were in some sense Hindus; the Infantry of the Bengal Army were largely Hindu, and it was said that the sepoy in his heart of hearts, despite Queen Victoria's red coat, was none too anxious to see the last Indian Army in being humbled by their assistance. That is all very well, but to find excuse for sheer cold feet is always easy and it is not unfair to say that the sepoy of 1845 had little heart for a really hard fight, as indeed he had shown in Gwalior.

As we go through with the pitched battles of this remarkable campaign we shall see how small a share of the hard work he was to do, especially in the first two battles; yet now and again we shall be equally astonished how certain corps, no different in their racial constitutions than the others, did snatch the bubble reputation beyond all cavil, in fact, that a good regiment answered manfully to its leading.

Lord Hardinge, as he became, used to say that in his opinion the Bengal sepoy of those days was like the Portuguese of whom he had experienced in the Peninsula, under British leading . . . they had their good days and their bad, and would whiles be brilliant, at other times most disappointing. Those who know something of the World War will perhaps say the same of Jean Baptiste.

THE MARCH TO MOODKEE

Information was now coming in clearly enough. The Sikh Army, perhaps 50,000 strong, with 100 guns, of whom 30,000 may have been regulars, had crossed the Sutlej on the 11th December, as already stated, at the *Harike ki Pattan*, the ford and ferry of Harike, a few miles above Ferozepore. General Littler had at once moved his force out and formed front facing them, but Tej Singh, who the *Punchayats* now left to carry out his rôle of Commander-in-Chief, marched on towards Ludhiana as though to meet the British Army of whose moves he was to some extent cognizant. Cunninghame is pleased to say that it was his desire to see the Sikh Army destroyed, that induced him to neglect the isolated force at Ferozepore, which he might have overwhelmed. Henry Lawrence, whose information was always complete, and who had every opportunity of discovering the truth later, always denied that there was any treachery, once the die of war had been cast.

However that may be, Tej Singh, keeping a strong detachment to watch Littler, moved the bulk of his army to the village referred to as Pheeroo Shuhr, or Pheeroo Shah, the one meaning the village of Pheeroo, the other simply "gaffer Pheeroo," and inaccurately referred to as Ferozeshah or Ferozeshuhr,[1] rather than the simple village name which it owned. He himself remained facing Littler.

The march of the British troops towards Ferozepore took them through Ludhiana where the Sutlej had curled round to the eastwards, and here Brigadier Ryan's Brigade joined its division, that of Sir Harry Smith, and the 73rd N.I. that of Sir John McCaskill, leaving Briga-

[1] This spelling, which was that used on the medal, is used in this book. Feroze or Firoz is a Persian name.

dier Wheeler, then one of the best soldiers of his day, in command of the danger point of Ludhiana, with but two battalions. The combined force now tramped on in the heavy dust to Bassian where Broadfoot had exerted himself to collect supplies, and thence on the 18th December, trudged into bivouac near the village of Moodkee, 150 miles from Amballa, about noon, after a march of some 20 miles. The Europeans having had little beyond their "gunfire" tea, and such oddments as were in their haversacks, began to cook breakfast. The long baggage trains would not be in till late, and the troops had had short nights, bad water and none too good rations, since they started. In the opinion of the Army Sir Henry Hardinge had carried his "no preparation" stunt too far, and nothing in the way of stores or hospitals were up. Lord Ellenborough, said everyone, would not have served them thus! But then, soldiers love to grumble and the circumstances were exceptional.

THE BATTLE OF MOODKEE

Hardly had the troops sat down to watch the coffee in the dixies, and the Indian troops taken off their clothes to eat, as their high caste wont, in their dhoties, when the alarm went. We have a most interesting note of colour, obviously accurate, from the memoirs of Q.M.-Sergeant Bancroft, who was a gunner in 2/1 Horse Artillery. He records here that standing to their guns as the alarm went, they saw the Commander-in-Chief and Staff galloping across their front, the Chief's trumpeter, a man of the 4th Light Cavalry, sounding the alarm as they galloped. The Cavalry had just sent in to say that 15,000 to 20,000 of the enemy Infantry with as many Cavalry and 40 guns were advancing to attack them. It was late in the day for the mounted

troops to make this discovery, which should have been found out hours earlier!

As at Maharajpore, so here, and at Chillianwallah in the Second Sikh War, no use seems to have been made of the strong force of cavalry at Sir Hugh's disposal to make an effective reconnaissance. The art of mounted reconnaissance and officer patrols was no new thing in the British Army. In the Peninsula the French complained that they were never free from lean young British officers on well-bred horses who could leap walls and ditches and hung always within a few hundred yards of their columns, watching every movement. Here it was not so.

The Sikhs in strength were apparently on them. The troops sprang to arms, the Indian troops in their mufti, the gunners sent back to the lines for the horses, horses who had found the water too foul to drink, and these hastily reharnessed, were brought up. Five horse-artillery batteries in line galloped to the front, reversed as their brigadier waved his sword over their heads and came into "action rear," the limbers close behind the guns. Behind the bulwarks of the guns and the cavalry the troops in camp were falling in and soon advanced in echelon of brigades to where the Sikh force, probably equally surprised, was also deploying.

It must be remembered that only a small portion of Sir Hugh Gough's Amballa force was up, the 1st Division was there under Harry Smith, the rest were bits and pieces. The Governor-General had joined the force at Ludhiana and was in camp, and his entourage and their baggage having pride of place, must have still further complicated supply and water.

Is was now past three in the afternoon and a December day in the Punjab is short enough. A number of Sikh guns had opened and round shot were trundling among

the legs of the Horse Artillery as they galloped up to get within range.

The country was like a pancake, covered with low scrub of *bheer*[1] and *jao*,[2] and some higher acacia trees, in which were enemy snipers. The first part of the battle, however, was fought on fairly open ground. Among the bushes and in the deepening blue haze of the short afternoon the Sikh regular line could be made out now deployed and ready.

The 9th Irregular Cavalry and part of the 4th Light Cavalry threatened the enemy's right; the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry brigades moving round his left. These led by the 3rd Light Dragoons like a lambent flame, still known in the Army as the "Moodkee-wallahs," rode down the whole rear of the Sikh Infantry and guns, silencing for a while the latter. Before they came out, however, they suffered severely from the fire of unbroken infantry.

The only complete Infantry formation that was present were the two brigades of Sir Harry Smith's division. Four battalions only of the two brigades of the 2nd Division was up, and one brigade of the 3rd under Sir John McCaskill. These four brigades now advanced in echelon with the bayonet, the 50th Foot leading, the 80th, 9th and 31st Foot doing with them the most of the work. The Infantry fight took place in dim starlight, and resulted in the complete repulse of the Sikhs and the capture of 17 of their 22 guns. But the night, though the moon assisted, was one of great confusion. The troops were not back on their bivouacs till midnight, and only a portion of the wounded could be found and attended to before daylight.

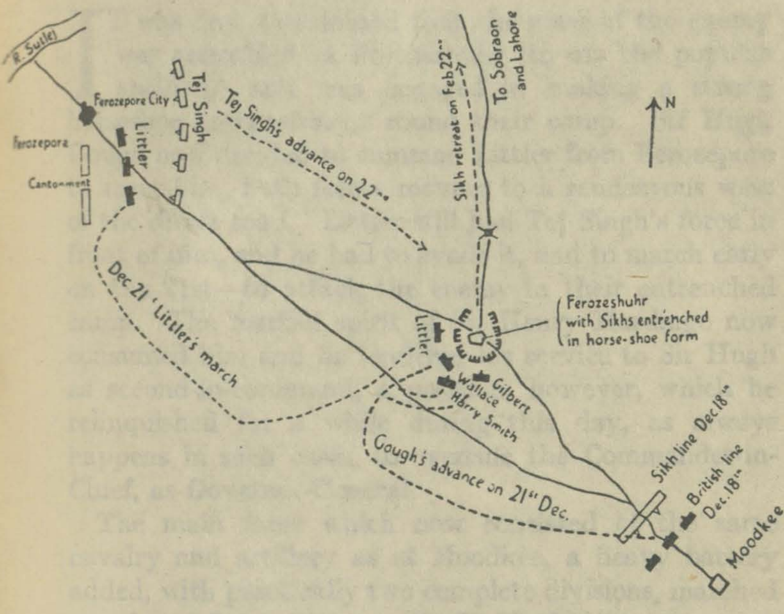
Next morning the force deployed again in front of the village of Moodkee lest the enemy should come on again. Nothing happened, however, till late after dark on the

[1] *Sizyphus jujuba.* [2] Dwarf tamarisk.

19th, when the sounds of the Governor-General's band and loud cheering was heard ushering into camp the 29th Foot and the 1st Bengal European Light Infantry who had been marching between twenty and thirty miles a day from the Simla Hills. With them were the 11th and 41st N.I., as also some heavy guns. The next day was also spent in clearing up the battlefield, when it was found that out of 3850 Europeans and 8500 Native troops, the total losses were but 872, of whom the larger portion were in the European units. The good old "fighting Bob," Sir Robert Sale of Jelalabad, who was with the Chief, was mortally wounded, losing a leg by a cannon ball, while Major-General Sir John McCaskill was shot dead through the chest.

The enemy's losses were never ascertained, and it was not possible to bury their dead. They must have been heavy, and the whole affair must have given the British high command something to think of. It eventually transpired that the enemy were but a detachment of some regular Infantry, 10,000 horse, mostly irregular, and 22 guns, of which 19 stayed with the British. The detachment had been sent forward to gain time while Ferozeshuhr was strengthened, and the battle was a surprise, in fact a genuine "encounter battle." And so the evening and the morning were the first day.

The BATTLES of MOODKEE and FEROZESHUHR



CHAPTER VIII

THE DRAMA OF FEROZESHUHR

The Eve of Ferozeshuhr
The Battle and Midnight Bivouac
The Dogged Victory in the Morning
The British Reach the Sutlej
The Situation in Sikhdom

THE EVE OF FEROZESHUHR

IT was now ascertained that the mass of the enemy was assembled at Ferozeshuhr (to use the popular spelling)[1] and was engaged in making a strong horseshoe entrenchment round their camp. Sir Hugh Gough now decided to summon Littler from Ferozepore to meet him, both forces moving to a rendezvous west of the direct road. Littler still had Tej Singh's force in front of him, and he had to evade it, and to march early on the 21st—to attack the enemy in their entrenched camp. The martial spirit of Sir Henry Hardinge now consumed him and he tendered his service to Sir Hugh as second-in-command, a position, however, which he relinquished for a while during this day, as always happens in such cases, to overrule the Commander-in-Chief, as Governor-General.

The main force which now consisted of the same cavalry and artillery as at Moodkee, a heavy battery added, with practically two complete divisions, marched on a broad front at 4 a.m. To Sir Hugh's intense annoyance he arrived close to the Sikh position to find that Littler who had the same distance to cover had not moved till 8 a.m., having, according to his despatch, received orders to start at that hour from the Governor-General! Sir Hugh, knowing how short was the time at his disposal and having had enough of night fighting and its terrible confusion at Moodkee, intended to fight at

[1] And that used on the medal clasps.

once, knowing too that Littler would be up ere long and act as his reserve.

THE BATTLE AND MIDNIGHT BIVOUAC

It was about 10.30 in the morning, bright and cool, and the Governor-General was having his breakfast with his staff. The troops were halted in mass, eating such haversack rations as they had, mostly " elephants' lugs," the heavy cakes issued to elephants, or something very like them, and Gough came to the Governor-General, after having ridden forward and reconnoitred. " I promise you a splendid victory, Sir Henry, if we attack at once." Then it was that Hardinge realized that the Chief did not intend to wait for Littler. He drew Sir Hugh fifty yards away and expostulated. The Chief was not at all disposed to give way, and marshalled his arguments. At last Sir Henry said : " Then, Sir Hugh, I must exercise my authority as Governor-General and forbid the attack until Littler has come up."

There was nothing more to be said, the Commander-in-Chief and his staff thought a lot, but ordered the march southwards to continue until the dust of Littler's advance could be seen.

How impossible a position this must have been, will be evident to every commander, but there it was, and the result was obvious to all. It was not till 1.30 p.m. that the Ferozepore force actually put in an appearance, and with the delay required for explanations, for deployment and the issue of orders, it was again not till the late hour of four in the short afternoon, before the battle was joined.

Littler's force had been in a state of considerable excitement ever since the Sikhs crossed and marched towards them, hearing each day the five signal guns that

announced their march nearer, and being inundated with reports of all kinds. The first news of Moodkee came to them when a Sikh horseman was captured on a 3rd Dragoon horse and told of the severe action and retreat of the Sikhs without their guns.

The British force had now deployed against the southern and western faces of the Sikh position, Gilbert's division on the right, then a brigade (all that was up) of the 3rd Division, commanded by Brigadier Wallace, and, on the left, General Littler's division with his cavalry brigade on his left flank. On the right of the line was Brigadier White's Cavalry Brigade and, in the centre between Wallace and Littler, that of Brigadier Gough. And it was now four o'clock on the shortest day of the year! The 1st Division (Harry Smith) was in reserve. That General declared that none of the divisional commanders received any instructions or ever knew where the enemy were. But as the line deployed the great mass of heavy Sikhs' guns, too heavy for open manœuvre, opened with a crash. The horse artillery galloped into action, and were heavily punished; twice did they limber up and gallop in to get to close terms, in a position whence their pop-guns could at least reach the heavy metal. Littler's division advanced to the attack in echelon of brigades from the right, the 62nd Foot leading, and at 150 yards they tried to charge the entrenchments, only to reel back under intense musketry and gun-fire. The 62nd had been marched too fast for themselves or their comrade corps, or they would have reached the guns. This brought the Sepoy Corps up too late, even if they have been "for it." That was the end of Littler's brief effort at attack, at which his heart was broken, but it was his own fault.[1] The 62nd in these few minutes had lost

[1] *Vide* Brigadier Ashburner's letters—*Journal of Society of Historical Research*, April, 1932.

17 officers and 188 men, and were ordered to withdraw. The rest of the division, which with the exception of the 33rd had made no great effort to follow the lead of the 62nd now drew off also, and as Gilbert's and Wallace's divisions went into action the triumphant shouts of the Sikhs opposite Littler were clearly audible. That did not daunt Gilbert, who went straight for the trenches in front of Ferozeshuhr, Taylor's brigade with which were both the 29th and 80th Foot, leading; this attack controlled by the Commander-in-Chief, while Hardinge had the left attack. McLaren's brigade followed, led by the 31st Foot, and between the two divisions came Wallace with the 9th Foot leading. All these attacks carried the trenches in the face of murderous fire, and even took many of the guns, but exposed to desperate charges and counter-attacks inside—the native battalions holding back and giving little support thus making gaps in the line—the utmost confusion prevailed. Part of the Sikh camp had been reached and was blazing, ammunition was exploding, and the whole scene beggars description. The centre division was falling back in the face of heavy fire when Harry Smith brought up Evan's brigade from the reserve, rallied Wallace's brigade and penetrated to the village of Ferozeshuhr which was carried at the point of the bayonet, wild scenes of fury and slaughter ensuing. Once more Napier's description of the majesty with which the British soldier fights was fulfilled. The 50th Foot was always the rallying point and it beat back the attack of four magnificent Sikh battalions of the famous "Avitabile" brigade, whom Harry Smith describes "at this moment, in their bearing noble and triumphant."

Nightfall now came on, a clear night with a full moon that, as it rose, showed to the masses of Sikhs, how isolated was the brigade in their midst. Sir Harry

Smith seeing the men killed, even as they rested under the hail of round shot at close range, and how persistent were the rushes of the Sikhs at various points, and having no knowledge of how it fared with the rest of the Army, at 8 a.m. drew off Ryan's brigade. With it were the mass of stragglers and oddments of the other brigades which had hung on to his advance. At last he found himself at the village of Misriwallah over a mile from the Sikh trenches on the Ferozepore road, where also General Littler's division had assembled, and his better units had rallied and formed up.

Gilbert's division as we have seen had carried the trenches on its front, and once inside, had wheeled to its left and moved down the line of guns, advancing also on Ferozeshuhr. It had been stopped by an explosion of ammunition and the Sikh counter-attacks, though many of its men had got to Sir Harry Smith. Lord Gough who was with it, seeing how terrible was the confusion withdrew the remnants some 300 yards from the Sikh trenches, and there the men lay down. Here Sir Henry Hardinge joined the Chief, and anxiously they watched the burning camps, and heard the cheers and counter-cheers, and wondered what the devil the rest of the Army was doing! All command and communication had broken down. So serious did the position seem, that Hardinge sent orders to his camp at Moodkee for certain papers of State to be destroyed, and sent away, too, the sword of Napoleon that Wellington had given him. Prince Waldemar, a Prussian visitor, was bundled off to safety at Ferozepore, not before one of his party had been killed. The Governor-General had seen nearly all his personal staff, who had assisted him in his rôle of wing-commander, killed or wounded, chiefly in taking his orders to units, and the whole of his wing was so far as he knew destroyed or broken.

It is this scene, this bivouac under the moon, with Gough and Hardinge in anxious conclave, the British infantry lying down by their side, that is depicted in Maarten's famous picture "The Midnight Bivouac."

With the fires blazing in the distance, and the ammunition dumps exploding, the headquarter bivouac and all around, were further much harassed by a heavy gun that fired at close range. At last Hardinge called on the officer commanding the 80th to take it, which they did, some of the Bengal Europeans assisting. And so in doubt and anxiety, in bitter cold and intense fatigue, the night wore to a close and long before dawn the famished men were got under arms, and reports began to filter in as to where Harry Smith and Littler were. During the night, however, Hardinge gradually found out the 9th, the 29th, the 31st and the 50th, all old friends of days gone by, found them in good heart and said a few cheering words. The unfortunate wounded had to shift for themselves as best they could, little groups forming here and there under trees where a regimental surgeon and his pannier was all that was available. Many were slaughtered where they had fallen.

It was during the artillery duel of the late afternoon that occurred the incident that Kipling has perpetuated in *Snarleyow.* It happened in Bancroft's troop of horse artillery exactly as recorded, with all the horror of detail, and Snarleyow actually was the name of the vicious gun-horse referred to. Major D'Arcy Todd of Herat, commanded and was killed, his body, tied on a limber, being later cut in two by a round shot as Bancroft also tells us.

THE DOGGED VICTORY IN THE MORNING

Harry Smith found an officer of the headquarter Staff at Misriwallah who had obviously gone off his head.[1] He had ordered Smith to go into Ferozepore and everyone else he could find. Smith refused to leave the field without personal orders from the Chief, and when he had rallied his men he took them from the demoralization of Littler's frightened sepoys, across to Gough's position before dawn, having found an officer able to guide him. During the night, however, more guns from Ferozepore actually joined the force, and soon after dawn, cold, hungry, but determined so far as the Europeans were concerned, the Army shook itself out, the Indian corps fell in, and advanced once more on the Sikh trenches. The high command were naturally anxious as to what Tej Singh from Ferozepore might be doing, though no one seemed to have taken much trouble to see. In any case if the Sikhs, who must have been badly rattled, were still in being they must be tackled before he could arrive. That was a worthy decision. Dogged had done it and the Sikh had not the rallying power of the British. The sight of what they thought to be a beaten army advancing again in long lines and columns with drums beating and colours flying was too much for them. The Commander-in-Chief and the Governor-General led, in front of the two wings, and they made as before for Ferozeshuhr, carried the trenches again, and once more wheeled to the left, and bore down along the whole line, driving the astonished Sikhs from their camps and guns, and sending them trudging off back to the Sutlej, less their guns, and everything that had made them an army.

Having swept on through the camp, the whole force

[1] He escaped a court martial by a plea of insanity.

faced in review order towards Ferozepore, and the direction from which Tej Singh was expected, and burst into thundering cheers as the two great leaders rode down the line with their staffs, an occasion after that night of dread and disappointment unequalled in the dramatic history of war. It is on record, however, as they passed a now cheering Indian corps, that an officer sore at heart, called out to the Chief, " Don't listen to them, Sir, not a dozen of them stayed with me during the night," and that alas was too true, and yet there was no disguising the fact that the whole army and Littler's division had been " put at it " pretty badly. Had they been better handled Jack Sepoy might have made a better show.

Even as the cheers died away, anxiety returned, for the cavalry were now engaged with Tej Singh's advanced troops. In the British Army the gun-limbers and waggons were empty, and there was little enough in the infantry pouches, with the reserve camels no one knew where.

Tej Singh came on, deployed his guns, opened fire, his cavalry actually coming within a 150 yards of the British infantry now echeloned in squares. The 3rd Light Dragoons even boiled up their weary horses to a ricketty charge and rode through them. Then learning that he was too late, that his own folk were marching hard for the river, and not realizing that the long scarlet line with its brave flying colours was largely bluff, Tej Singh turned and marched off whence he came.

There was then far too much to do to think of pursuit, and it was necessary to rest and feed the starving men and find water for the horses, collect the wounded, and take up the 65 guns that the bayonet had won.

When all is said and done it was a famous victory, and the stoutness of the Commander-in-Chief and the

still greater resolution of his colleague, between them made triumph out of what was precious near disaster. The seven British battalions, and the 3rd Light Dragoons and their good comrades of the Horse Artillery had won the fight, as the butchers bill shows.

This is the tally :

British killed, 37 officers, 462 men; *wounded*, 78 officers, 1,054 men. *Native*, 17 officers, 178 men, *killed*; 18 officers, 571 men *wounded*: the grand total being 694 killed and 1,721 wounded.

The force rested close to the stricken field all the 23rd and among the famous pictures of the day is that of the Governor-General and the remnant of his staff riding over the battlefield and burning camps, among which dumps of ammunition were constantly exploding, to the considerable loss of our own men.

THE BRITISH REACH THE SUTLEJ

After their defeat the whole Sikh Army hurried away to put the Sutlej between themselves and the terrible men in scarlet whose uniform they too had copied. Sir Hugh Gough moved forward on the 24th to Sultan Khan Wallah where the water was good, five miles nearer the Sutlej and seven miles from Ferozepore. There in the cantonment the Governor-General established himself, and there the wounded were being brought to such hospital care as could be improvised. Here Prince Waldemar, whose medical attendant had been killed at Ferozeshuhr, rejoined him, and normal life of the army in camp was resumed.

Whatever was to be done, whether or no we were to cross the Sutlej and enforce our own terms, it was necessary to wait for all troops already on the move to come up, and to send for more. Especially must the

artillery side be strengthened, and never again must horse artillery and a few light field guns have to face those lines of well-served guns of position alone, that blew holes and gaps in the columns and sent the lighter guns sky-high.

On the 6th January, substantial reinforcements marched in and large convoys of stores were steadily coming up. Sir John Grey from Meerut brought in the 9th and 16th Lancers with two Native Cavalry corps, the 10th Foot and three Native Infantry battalions. Brigadier Godby brought into Ludhiana the Sirmur and Naseri Gurkha battalions, the 30th N.I. and another regiment of cavalry.

The force was now reorganized, into a Cavalry division of four brigades under Sir Joseph Thackwell and a fifth division under Sir John Grey, while Sir Robert Dick took over poor McCaskill's division, the 3rd, which had now got its second brigade, and eventually both the 3rd and 5th divisions had three brigades each, giving a total of four cavalry and twelve infantry brigades with a much stronger force of artillery.

The unavoidable delay, however, had given the Sikh new heart. They, too, re-organized and brought down fresh divisions and their arrogance returned. They knew how little the sepoy had seemed to want to face them, and this story, too, had gone all over India, where the bazaars are ever watchful. The officers of the Army in India were not always disciplined, and not only were there newspaper correspondents in every regiment, but men wrote freely and critically to friends in India, and at home with very little knowledge. The tactical failures of the Commander-in-Chief were talked about freely, and it is not too much to say that the whole of India waited, and that affairs were more than anxious. That Sikh Army must, everyone felt, be crushed and at

least subordinated to a Civil Government. *Punchayat* rule must go. That, however, was easier to say than to do. It was, therefore, not without secret satisfaction that the Governor-General and General Headquarters saw the Sikhs insisting on recrossing to the British side of the Sutlej, so much so that they might say with Napoleon, "*Enfin je les tiens.*"

To everyone's surprise, the Sikh Commander had thrown a bridge over the Sutlej by the two villages of Sobra, known together as Sobraon, the "two Sobras," established a bridge-head, and was steadily increasing his garrison on the hither side.

The British reluctantly allowed these ventures, since until their ammunition arrived with a convoy painfully lumbering up from Delhi, they were in no fit state, despite their brave line of dressed tents, to bring on another battle. Until that convoy should come in, they were but a tinkling cymbal.

THE SITUATION IN SIKHDOM

With the Sikh armies in flight across the Sutlej it is to be imagined that there was some excitement in Lahore. The Ranee might be glad enough that her Army should be tamed, but what next would these British do, would they try conquest and annexation ? That was the last thing that those who enjoyed revenues and privy purses wanted. Who was there wise and clever enough to help them ? There was only one now to whom they all could turn, who had enough verve and experience, and enough courage to direct their affairs, and who was sufficiently void of scruple to perpetrate any atrocity that circumstances might demand. That man was the survivor of the three hated Janmu brothers, no less a person than the Rajput Gulab Singh. To him the whole Sikh people

now turned and he was acclaimed by Durbar and people as minister and leader. What Tej Singh and Lal Singh and the Ranee really thought no man knows. They all concurred, as did the Army, in putting the State into the hands of their hated neighbour and servant. Perhaps the baby was now so troublesome to hold, that they were glad to see someone other than a Sikh essay the task.

While these things were stirring Lahore, the Army *Punchayats* were doing their best to rebuild the shattered Army, which had it been possible to pursue it after Ferozeshuhr, might not have held up its head again. However that may have been, we know that Sir Hugh Gough was in no position to follow them. So immense rows of guns were collected on the right bank of the Sutlej on either side of the Harikee crossing and up and down stream of the two Sobras.

As spirits revived and *moral* returned, the Sikh Army became more venturesome and raiding across the Sutlej became serious. The Sikhs had even a garrison of mercenary Pathans and Rohillas in the cis-Sutlej fort of Dharamkot which was full of cannon, and threatened the road to India. In addition, too, a large force of Sikhs under Ranjur Singh actually crossed the Sutlej near to the fortress of Phillour, and threatened Ludhiana. Indeed had the beaten army recovered its nerve, and the nearness of victory in the late battle was stronger in its memory than the sting of their actual defeat. Gulab Singh, who was at his best as a diplomatist, had in the meantime opened up secret communications with the Governor-General and even hinted that the Durbar were prepared to come to terms. While earnestly considering any steps that might bring about a satisfactory settlement, Sir Henry Hardinge saw clearly enough that the prestige of the British, so lowered by the details of their

hardly fought victories, could only be insured by crushing the defiant Army. The first thing to do, therefore, was to put a stop to the raids which were much magnified in India, and get to the Army the big guns and the ample ammunition which alone would make it the dominant factor on the Sutlej. How this was done and how the final battles were fought must be told in the next chapter. The final fight is perhaps the greatest victory that we have ever won in India and the saddest.

CHAPTER IX

THE CROWNING VICTORIES OF ALIWAL AND SOBRAON

THE SIKHS THREATEN LUDHIANA

WHEN the Sikhs threw their bridge at the two Sobras, Sir Hugh moved his forces further up stream to present a front to the Sikh line opposite. On the 17th January, Sir Harry Smith was sent with a brigade of infantry and a field battery to capture Dharamkot, which threatened the convoy road. This he did after a march of twenty-six miles, the garrison surrendering on summons. While, however, Smith was marching on Dharamkot the Commander-in-Chief received the news of the crossing of the Sutlej aforesaid by Ranjur Singh, at Philour, and of his taking up a position threatening Ludhiana, but also whence he could threaten the great convoy. Ludhiana, however, was fairly safe with Godby's brigade and advancing reinforcements, which included the 53rd Foot, and the Shekawatti Irregular Brigade at Bassian. Gough now ordered Cureton's Cavalry Brigade and Smith's own 2nd Brigade under Brigadier Wheeler to move up to support him, directing him to move via the big market town of Jagraon on Ludhiana and protect that place.

He reached Jagraon on the 20th January, and was there joined by the 16th Lancers and the 53rd Foot. He also learnt there that Ranjur Singh was still at Baranhara on the Sutlej, but had a detachment at the fort of Buddowal and another detachment in the stronger fort of Gangrana, ten miles south of Buddowal, and well within hail of the convoy route. He also received an



THE BATTLE OF SOBRAON, FEBRUARY 10, 1846

urgent summons from Godby at Ludhiana for relief. Leaving his wheeled transport, for which the country now appeared too heavy, in the fort at Jagraon, he marched soon after midnight for Ludhiana, intending to leave Buddowal on his right. He also summoned Godby to move out and meet him on the strong hill of Suneth, some three miles from Buddowal. This Godby, who in spite of his danger had not got his troops ready, failed to do. Marching through the moonlight, Smith arrived within a couple of miles of Buddowal, and there learnt from Godby that Ranjur Singh had moved his whole force to that place, and was blocking the road to Ludhiana.

This meant that Smith must force his way through the whole Sikh force deployed to bar his progress, or try to reach Ludhiana by a detour. The first was bound to mean heavy fighting, and loss and failure would seriously affect Godby's position. He therefore decided to strike south, and started off through heavy sand, with an order of march that would let him wheel into line to his left and face the Sikhs if need be. So off he trudged, and the Sikhs, perfectly aware of what was in progress, marched towards Ludhiana parallel to him, but with the difference that they were on a beaten hard road, and the British were in the heaviest sand.

Presently the Sikh guns, said to number 40 all told, while Smith had but 18—of which 12 were H.A. guns and 6 field guns, nine-pounders at best—forging ahead, came into action against the British main body. Other guns with the Sikh Horse opened on the baggage column. The transport drivers were seized with panic as usual, the camel-men deserted their camels, and the Sikhs captured most of the baggage with many artillery ammunition tumbrils, shown later in Lahore as captured guns, and most of the sick. Ranjur Singh now pressed in on Smith's rear, but was held at bay by the H.A.

guns. He, however, deployed seven battalions for battle across the British flank and rear. Smith was ready enough to take up the challenge, but his men were unfit. They had been marching all night and were dead to the world. Nor were his British battalions at their best. The 39th had not had their heavy losses of Moodkee and Ferozeshuhr replaced and were weak, the 53rd was a battalion of young soldiers, and to fight a pitched battle that afternoon was impossible. There had not been a breath of air all day, and it was one of those intensely hot days that now and again occur in a Punjab cold season. Smith therefore drew off, his battalions staggered on in column, and Cureton with his three regiments of horse and his H.A. guns effectively covered their rear. The Sikhs would not leave a village which was the main point in the line, and when this point was passed the infantry trudged on unmolested as best they could for Ludhiana. It was not till close on dusk that the troops got into camp there, many helped in on the guns, or holding to the cavalrymen's stirrups and even riding their horses.

Harry Smith himself, the efficient Peninsula brigade-major, intolerant of bad soldiering, and bad tactics, had been properly had, and he knew it. Yet it cannot be said that it was his fault, for heavy sand, hot days and the enemy had all combined, while water scarcity had always a hampering effect on all tactics in this particular terrain. Fortunately his losses in men were not heavy.

At Ludhiana he found that Godby had received his instructions, but had moved out late and in the wrong direction. He eventually turned up after dark without having fired a shot. The next day, the 22nd, was spent in resting the troops, in squaring up the distressed units, and in preparing to attack the Sikhs in proper style.

On the 23rd, taking Godby with him, Smith marched back to Buddowal, from whence Ranjur Singh had re-

turned to the Sutlej. There he waited several days, having heard from Gough that he was sending him Wheeler's brigade with two more Native Cavalry regiments, and the Shekawatti Irregular force from Bassian, and that Taylor's brigade had been ordered to Dharamkot in support. This latter, however, Smith sent back, as he had as much as he could water and feed, and enough to deal faithfully, as he hoped, with Ranjur Singh.

THE WELL-FOUGHT ALIWAL

We now come to the more joyful period when the Sikhs were to be met with judgment and tactical skill, as well as by troops more fully prepared, than in the hasty rush forward from Amballa to meet the first invaders. The measures of Broadfoot and his successors, while putting considerable duress on the country-side, had succeeded in getting supplies collected in various places for the Commissariat agents to take over, and the Army was at last being well found. " Elephants' lugs " were no longer the main means of sustenance.

As his various components reached him, Harry Smith organized an order of battle, which comprised two brigades of cavalry and four brigades of infantry, two, however, of only two battalions, as follows:

Cavalry Division.

Cureton.	
Macdowell's Brigade	16th Lancers. 3rd Light Cavalry. 4th Irregular Cavalry.
Stedman's Brigade	Bodyguard. 1st Light Cavalry. 5th Light Cavalry. Shekawatti Cavalry.
	3 Troops H.A.

Infantry.

1st Brigade (Hicks)	39th Foot. 24th N.I. 27th N.I.
2nd Brigade (Wheeler)	50th Foot. 48th N.I. Sirmoor Gurkhas.
3rd Brigade (Wilson)	53rd Foot. 30th N.I.
4th Brigade (Godby)	36th N.I. (Nusseree Gurkhas).

Artillery.

2 field batteries, 2 8-inch Howitzers.

Ranjur Singh, it appeared, had now taken up his position near the village of Aliwal on the river where he had collected boats, and where he had been joined by the 'Avitabile' brigade, the 4000 well-trained men of *Witbul Sahib,* which Harry Smith had seen, fierce and proud, bearing down on him at Ferozeshuhr. Gossip credited Ranjur Singh with three different plans; to attack the now sparsely garrisoned Ludhiana, to march on Buddowal, or to go to Jagraon.

Whichever he did, Smith intended to intercept him, and on January 28th he marched over the open plain towards the Sutlej in a north-westerly direction, with adequate cavalry detachments in advance to tell him of any enemy movements. He marched in order of battle, his cavalry in line of squadron columns, with two horse batteries in the centre, and behind them the infantry brigade in line of brigade columns. After advancing steadily for eight miles, they reached about 10 a.m. the village of Porrain, atop a low rise, and there from the roof of a house the General saw the enemy. Below him lay a plain a mile wide, and two miles long. On the far

side, between two villages, Aliwal on the right, and Bhundri on the left, were a line of trenches, but the Sikhs themselves seemed to be in movement as a spy had already reported, towards Jagraon. Smith's scarlet line had now topped the rise and was visible to the Sikhs who stopped their movement, and occupied the three miles of trenches with their flanks on the two villages. Aliwal seemed fortified, while Bhundri was on an eminence with a grove of trees in front. The plain below was an alluvial one on the banks of the Sutlej, which ran behind it. Here was a chance! Ranjur Singh would fight with his back to the river and only the defile of his ferry boats and two deep fords on his left rear. God help him! and no doubt the old prayer went up to Providence in Harry Smith's heart in more reverent words; "If you don't help me, don't help the bar!"

The whole British force now looked down from the rim of the rise they were on. With the open plain to cross, the Sikhs and their forty odd guns would have a fine field of fire. Those two 8-inch howitzers would have their work cut out, and the light Horse Artillery, as usual, would have to hurry in till they could get on terms with the heavy metal that Coates had cast for Runjhit Singh. But to march straight on to the guns and make no bones about it was the British way, certainly the way of the Queen's and Company's Europeans.

So Harry Smith ordered his cavalry brigades to take ground right and left, and let his infantry columns now advance in line. A magnificent spectacle it must have appeared as the force of six brigades marched down on to the plain, covered with the short *doub* grass of the Punjab, firm and springy to hoof and marching boot. With Hicks', Wheeler's and Wilson's brigades in the right centre and left of the front line, Godby's brigade

echeloned in rear of the right, the Shekawatti Infantry on the left with Stedman's cavalry brigade on the right, Macdowell's on the left, the British marched forward.

With no dust, the sun shining, and the plain like a billiard table, the scene was hard to beat in glory and majesty. Observing that the Sikh position outflanked his left, Smith took ground to the left and then again faced to his front, as if at a grand review. Thus handled it was noticed that the sepoy corps were in high fettle, for your sepoy expects and demands victory. Victory in this dignified, steady scene seemed already in their hands, and again, to use modern army slang, the tails of all were curling over their back! It was the influence of Harry Smith and his way of soldiering, and his knowledge of how to stage a battle that did it. The vexations of Buddowal were forgotten and Ferozeshuhr seemed like a bad dream.

The line had hardly put itself in motion after taking ground to its left when the Sikhs guns opened, and Sir Harry Smith paused a minute to take stock. He then decided to carry Aliwal first, bringing up Godby's brigade and setting Hicks' brigade from the front line at it, who carried the village and took two guns in handsome style. While this was in progress, Wheeler and Wilson's brigades attacked straight to their front, driving the enemy from their trenches at the bayonet's point, despite their steady volleys. The village of Bhundri now alone remained. On the right, Ranjur Singh seeing the danger of Aliwal, brought up a large force of his horse who were charged by Stedman's brigade, with which was Cureton himself. The Sikhs recoiled, and Godby pressed on towards the large Sikh camp beyond Aliwal on the river-bank, which seemed full of infantry. Bhundri was now attacked by the cavalry on the left, to help whom

the 53rd Foot now came up, and that point too was carried, Avitabile's battalions putting up a fierce resistance; here it was bayonet to bayonet and sabre to locking-ring with a vengeance and the enemy could not stand it. The Sikhs were now marching off to the river crossings, while the British line reforming its ranks pressed on, all its guns pouring shell and round shot on to the Sikh columns. Presently the British line which had been moving almost at right angles to the Sutlej, wheeled and faced the river. Before them hurried the Sikhs, who were crowding into their boats, or facing the fords, the bridge apparently being broken. In vain Ranjur Singh tried to get his guns away. Two got over, two sunk in quicksands, the remainder to the number of 65 were captured with the whole of a big camp, and all its baggage and supplies. On the other side the Sikhs tried to form a line, but under fire from every British gun broke away even from that, and the guns that had crossed were captured too and brought back.

It was a brilliant victory, won for the loss of 590 casualties, of which the 16th Lancers with 58 killed and 86 wounded, headed the list, having by their brilliant and repeated charges covered themselves with glory, and made no little contribution to the general result. The Sikhs admitted a loss of three thousand killed or drowned alone, and Ranjur Singh suffered to the full the penalty of getting himself into a battle position with a river at his back.

The estimates of the Sikh forces vary, but it is probable that it was between 15,000 and 20,000 men, while the British could have numbered little over 10,000. The Duke of Wellington, when the reports arrived home, was loud in his praise of the tactical handling of the three arms, so as to support each other to the uttermost. To Lord Gough, anxiously awaiting news and listening to

the muffled roar of the distant guns, the reports of the victory came as an immense relief and joy.

The result of this battle was that the Sikhs withdrew all their detachments back across the Sutlej, with the exception of those at Sobraon, and Lord Gough was able to concentrate all his troops from their feeding and observation camps along the Sutlej. Down the Indus at Bahawalpore stood Sir Charles Napier, summoned with all his forces by the Governor-General.

THE EVE OF SOBRAON

It was not till the 3rd January that Harry Smith, having been hampered with the disposal of the captured guns was able to march back, leaving Wheeler with a brigade of all arms on the upper Sutlej and arriving at the main camp on the 8th, to the cheers of the watching soldiery. What specially rejoiced those in authority was the news of the recovered sepoy *moral*, which it was devoutly hoped would spread to the other divisions. All India had been gazing at the Sutlej, and the fact that Ranjur Singh was over again on the British side was blazoned throughout India in that remarkable way in which from time immemorial news has always travelled. Equally quickly, happily, went the news of Aliwal. The enemies of Britain put down their heads, and thought that their time might not be yet. Up at Lahore, Gulab Singh and the Durbar were thinking furiously, wondering which horse to back, but pretty well inclined now to stake their money on the red, and the new Rajput Minister made fresh overtures to the Governor-General. He was given to understand that having settled the Army difficulty, the British would be prepared to maintain a Sikh State and Government at Lahore.

The Sikh Army, however, was not at all in the mood

of Lahore, and was going to fight again. About the time that Ranjur Singh crossed at Philour, Tej Singh commenced to bring the whole of the Army over the Sutlej, expanding his bridge-head into a vast position for 40,000 men with the whole of the 67 guns that they had managed to collect after their losses at Ferozeshuhr. They attacked the British outposts on several occasions with spirit, and worked like beavers at giant parapets and earthworks. And all the while Sir Hugh Gough bided his time, and the convoy drew nearer, while the Governor-General remained in Ferozepore and carried on his own work from there.

On the 7th February the long awaited convoy lumbered in, effectively covered by Harry Smith's return march. The heavy guns, drawn by huge elephants, numbered 19, 5 being 18-pounders, the remainder 8-inch howitzers, and behind them an immense train of ammunition of all kinds. The arrival of these outward and visible signs of power, was the signal for immense enthusiasm on the part of the sepoys, who ran alongside, laughing and patting the barrels. With the convoy's arrival—the convoy that had had to be made up at Delhi and Allahabad, and had come all the way from Delhi by road, a matter of many hundreds of miles—and with the return of Harry Smith's force, the board was now set. On the 8th the Governor-General came to camp as well, a less useful piece of furniture than the 18-pounders. He was anxious to use the boats at Ferozepore to put a force across the Sutlej that should march up the right bank by night and thus attack the rear of the Sikhs. Gough was not prepared to agree, and there is no doubt that the Commander-in-Chief had wisdom on his side. A frontal attack, which Hardinge wanted to avoid, was essential to his scheme, but a frontal attack supported and preceded by such a bombardment of heavy guns as India had rarely

seen. If the proposed flanking movement was discovered the Sikh Army might withdraw to the right bank. If they fought as they now were, a defeat should mean annihilation, which was the only course that would insure a speedy peace. What Harry Smith had done to Ranjur Singh was possible on a larger scale here. The Governor-General could but agree.

On the 9th, Sir Hugh summoned his divisional commanders to receive their instructions, which this time were full enough. His order of battle was varied slightly from that already given, to suit lesser conveniences. Littler held Ferozepore and watched the crossings there; Grey covered the communications with that place, and Gough had his original three divisions to hand, the 3rd, that of Dick who had taken McCaskill's place, having a third brigade of four battalions, and one unattached brigade under Campbell was in reserve.

The entrenched camp of the Sikhs had grown as the days wore on to a stupendous affair, with deep ditches, and steep parapets that even scaling ladders in many parts could not cope with. From horn to horn the semicircle it covered must have been full four thousand yards.

The British camp lay some two and a half miles away, along the line of an old nullah or bed of the Sutlej, facing the left front of the Sikhs. A strong outpost half-way between the two camps, held in strength by the British, had been established at the village and mound of Rhodawallah. Several dry nullahs favoured the approaches to the Sikh position, both parallel and at right angles to it, and Gough's plan for battle on the 10th was simple enough. The three divisions were to close on the position. Smith on the right, Gilbert on the centre, and Dick, with his three brigades, on the left. The heavy guns would be brought down to effective range after dark, and a bom-

bardment would commence at dawn. After this Dick would attack the position opposite the British left, and the other two divisions would advance and hold the enemy to their works without at first pressing in.

All the night of the 9th there was great preparation, but the heavy guns could not bring up their full tally of ammunition in the time, for Gough had not realized what we all know now, that the collecting of heavy ammunition is a long business. The mass of the cavalry under Thackwell would be behind the left, but Cureton's Brigade would watch the ford at Harikee where Lal Singh's horse were massed on the opposite bank.

The night was cold but clear till the early morning mist arose. By early dawn all was alert, the heavy guns in position a thousand yards in front of Rhodawallah, and all ready for the attack as soon as the mist would allow the gunners to see. Artillerymen were short, and the men from the Horse Artillery came down to man some of the heavy guns, their own guns being hooked in ready to bring down to them when their turn should come. Bancroft gives a lively account of the scenes in the batteries, and of the high spirits of all concerned, and the chaff among the gunners.

THE GREAT BATTLE

It was an hour after dawn before the rising sun began to dispel the mist, that the guns opened, both heavy and the light field batteries. The Sikhs were obviously taken by surprise, for their French drums and trumpets could be heard through the mist sounding the alarm and the assembly, strangely familiar to the ears of the Peninsula soldiers present.

The first bombardment for those days was stupendous. The whole Army stood amazed and delighted, as the

Sikhs were plied with their own medicine. The Governor-General had returned to Ferozepore whence came by a staff officer some cryptic message, misdelivered at that, and Gough took no notice. But his artillery ammunition was exhausted so far as the expense dumps went, and the fiery chief seemed pleased. *Rosalie* was always the girl for him ! " Tell Sir Robert Dick to move on in the name of God."

At 9 a.m., Stacey's Brigade of four battalions, two of which, the 10th and 53rd, were European, opened the ball, and to support them the Horse Artillery galloped in to three hundred yards. The fire from the Sikh guns still in action, with many wall-pieces and zumburaks, was devastating, nevertheless Staceys' men actually stormed the works and entered the entrenchments, taking many of the guns at the point of the bayonet. Although staggered, the Sikhs, who were in great force within, recovered themselves and counter-attacked with disciplined determination. The other two brigades moved up to support Stacey, and Gough ordered Smith and Gilbert to increase their pressure. The weight of the Sikhs opposite Dick, however, was too great. Stacey and the supporting brigades were forced back, and out of the trenches. The first *élan*, magnificent though it had been, had failed to carry and keep the works.

Gough at once ordered Smith and Gilbert to convert their holding attacks into a storming. The brigades rushed forward, under an astounding fire, the Sikh Infantry steady as a rock delivering volleys, and forming squares at all who entered. On Harry Smith's front Hicks' brigade led the assault, but its ladders could not breast the parapets and it fell back severely shattered.

With stately discipline, Penny's brigade opened its ranks to let the shattered units of Hicks' fall back to reform. In Gilbert's Division both brigades attacked,

failed to climb the parapets, lost their brigadiers Maclaren and Taylor, and were driven back with heavy loss. While Gilbert's repulsed brigades in the centre deliberately set to work to hoist themselves over the parapets in sheer dogged despair, science had been at work on the far left. The sappers had succeeded in cutting a narrow opening in the earthwork, and Thackwell passed some of his horsemen through in single file and let loose the 3rd Dragoons in another of their daring Moodkee rides; as they tore through the Sikh camps, more cavalrymen followed. The pressure of Smith and Gilbert's brigades gave those of Dick time to reform and come on again. Bit by bit, parapet by parapet, the entrenchments were carried all along the line.

THE DEBACLE ON THE RIVER-BANK

The Sikhs were breaking, the thunder of Thackwell's increasing squadrons broke up every attempt to stand, the redcoats were pouring through gaps and alleys in their once unbroken parapets. Thundering cheers came down the wind behind them as the companies reformed and advanced. Here and there some of the magnificent old Sikh Infantry tried to stand up to it, and formed their triple line with bayonets levelled. But it was no use. With a cracking of whips the Horse Artillery were flinging their guns at impossible gaps in the trenches only to find themselves safely over. Any Sikh rallying square was treated to a round shot. Alas and alack! It was now *sauve qui peut* and the devil take the hindmost. The Sikhs streamed towards the fords and their bridge of boats. Anywhere to get away from those shining brass guns, those devils in helmets with the red horse-hair plumes, and those cheering, galloping Lancers!

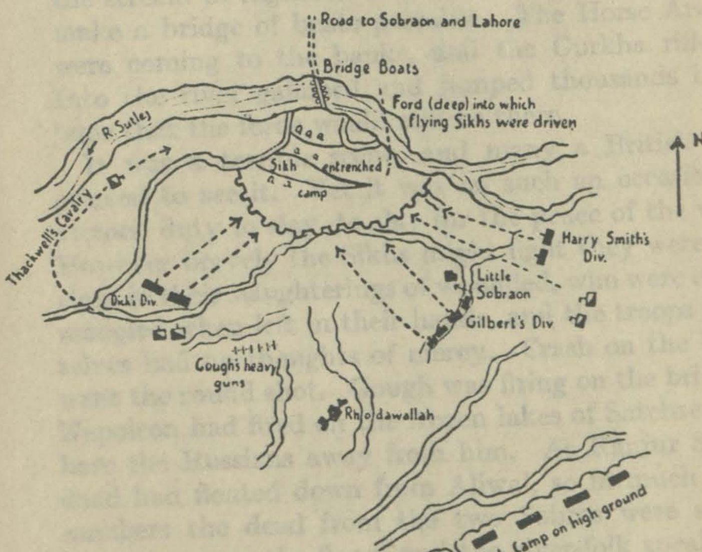
But heaven in its courses had fought against them.

Heavy winter rain in the lower Himalayas had brought the river down in flood. Seven inches had the Sutlej risen that night. The fords were gone, the bridge was groaning and straining at the swelling waters, and now the stream of fugitives were breaking all the rules that make a bridge of boats passable. The Horse Artillery were coming to the banks, and the Gurkha riflemen. Into the river galloped and jumped thousands in the hope that the fords would still be there.

It was a terrible scene, and many a British heart grieved to see it. Yet it was on such an occasion the victors' duty to slay, to slay for the peace of the world. However bravely the Sikhs might fight they were atrocious in their slaughterings of wounded, who were cruelly mangled when left in their hands, and the troops themselves had no thoughts of mercy. Crash on the bridge went the round shot. Gough was firing on the bridge as Napoleon had fired on the frozen lakes of Satchsen that bore the Russians away from him. As Ranjur Singh's dead had floated down from Aliwal, so in much larger numbers the dead from the two Sobras were swirled away down on the flood, and the river-folk speak of it even to this day. Sobraon, the two Sobras themselves, are gone, for the river has washed away large areas in its bed. But old men till quite lately would speak of the despairing Sikh gunners, with bottles of fiery spirit lashed to their wrists, sponging out frantically, and ramming home the last charge of case, before the bayonets with the flushed European faces above drove home the coughing blow that set the world at naught.

Before noon all was over. Gough and his gallant men had won as they deserved to do, and the sepoy battalions to a reasonable extent had recovered their good name. With colours flying and drums beating they stood on the banks madly cheering their Chief as he rode along the

The BATTLE of SOBRAON



line, looking at the floating, drowning debris of the now-broken bridge, and the scene of despair. Then they re-formed, and marched off as after a funeral, to their camps, to the jauntiest airs they knew, while the ambulance men and the troops detailed to clear the field did their ghastly work. The British butchers' bill was not too heavy for victory that ended the War; 2283 in all, of whom 320 were killed. The European Infantry bore most of the burden, but this time the losses were better distributed. The Sikh losses may have been 10,000 out of the 20,000 engaged, with 67 guns and 200 *zumburaks*, or camel-guns, which remained atop the camel saddles, when taken off the beasts, and the guns fired from the saddle as from a carriage. They were taken in position on the parapets.

THE BRITISH IN LAHORE

The Governor-General who had been present at the battle, rode into Ferozepore that afternoon to hustle Littler in crossing the advanced troops over the river by ferry, and then to get the great bridge swung out. It was ready on the 12th, and the British Army passed over and was at Kasur, sixteen miles from Ferozepore, and thirty-two from Lahore, on the 13th. With the Chief was his whole Army save a division left on the battlefield. The road was known to many officers who had been up and down it to Kabul. Sale, McCaskill, Broadfoot, with many of the lesser lights of the Afghan War had fallen in these Sikh battles, and the Army and the State were the poorer thereby; but the survivors knew where they were bound, and all hearts were re-joicing. The real rest after the Battle of Sobraon was to take place here in new country, and on the 14th January Hardinge also marched in.

On the 15th came the fox, Gulab Singh, Minister of the Sikh Durbar; with him was a peace mission empowered to accept whatever terms the victors were pleased to dictate. Behind was India, astounded at the fortune that seemed never to fail the English for long. What would they do with it?

The Sikh Army, or what was left of it, though there was still another on the Afghan border, less guns, treasure and munitions of war, also gladly acquiesced in Gulab Singh's mission. It had taken itself off to the vicinity of Amritsar, the sacred city of the Sikhs, where it lay licking its wounds, with its best officers dead, and few military ideas left.

The British announcement at this stage was brief and to the point. It would recognize Dhuleep Singh as a friendly monarch, and would take to itself the Doaba, the country between the Sutlej and the Beas rivers, so as better to defend its own territory. It would demand 150 lakhs of war indemnity (about a million and a half sterling at that period), and the lesser details it would settle at Lahore. The 25 guns which at one time or another, the Sikhs had got back over the Sutlej, were to be handed over; the Sikh Army was in future to be managed on the system that prevailed in the time of Runjhit Singh, and was not to consist of more than twenty-five battalions and twelve thousand horse.

These terms in general were accepted by Gulab Singh and the envoys after some haggling, and the boy Maharajah came into the British camp at Lailana on the 20th. He then re-entered Lahore alongside the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief. The British Army camped on the Plain of Mian Mir where the execution of Jowahir Singh by the Army had taken place, and put a garrison into the great Mogul citadel, which dominates

the city of Lahore. To Lahore, too, came Sir Charles Napier from Sind.

Gulab Singh was anxious to remain as Vizier of the new Punjab, and dreamed perhaps of founding a better dynasty. Sir Henry Hardinge's policy was otherwise. He decided that he would make the territories of Jammu and the Rajput Hills independent of the Punjab, a point on which the hills had always had their ambitions, and eventually decided to add the Mogul Province of Kashmir taken by Runjhit Singh and his Sikhs from the Afghans in 1820, to the Province of Jammu. Since the indemnity, it was found, could not be paid by the empty Sikh Treasury, Gulab Singh was allowed to pay it as part of the desiderata which gave him Kashmir. Because the territory was reduced by Hazara, the indemnity was reduced to 100 lakhs and to help him meet this, he was allowed to take the family wealth of Suchet Singh, his murdered brother, which lay unsettled in the Ferozepore Treasury.

Gulab Singh recognizing that his bigger plans were off the horizon, was extremely glad to accept the offer, and was duly invested with the title of Maharajah at a Durbar held at Amritsar on the 15th March, 1846. There he expressed himself as more than gratified, styling himself, without any ironical intent, as the "*Ghulam zurkharid*," "the gold-bought slave" of the British Government.

It is interesting to learn that Sirdar Tej Singh seeing crowns a-begging, asked for another slice of the Punjab for himself as an independent sovereign and offered twenty-five lakhs therefor.

As there were 20,000 British troops in the capital, the Sikh soldiers were brought there to be paid up before discharge, which sent them to their homes with a good taste in their mouths. They went as proud and dignified

men, vowing their faith in the Khalsa principles, and in the future of their religion and brotherhood. At Amritsar the Sikh priests took another line. They congratulated the British on having relieved them from the fear of the Moslem, and expressed the opinion that the faith of the Khalsa was worthy of adoption by all the world. Those who know the teachings of Baba Nanak, know how closely in many directions they follow the road of Christ, while the later developments of Guru Govind and Singhism were eminently suited for the times and the ordering of the quarrelsome sturdy Jat race.

Lal Singh was to remain as Vizier since no better presented himself, while Major Henry Lawrence of the Bengal Artillery, the most famous and trusted of all the soldier politicals, was appointed Resident at the Lahore Court, whose guidance and advice was to be freely sought.

That for the moment ends the story, and shows how genuine was the desire of the British Government to set up a State that should be sufficient for itself, and useful to India. The general public was a little inclined to scoff, and say that it could not possibly succeed. Perhaps they recognized by instinct that to the Indus and the real Mogul boundary the power of the rulers of India must go. The Governor-General thought otherwise, and when he was forced ere long by health to terminate his short Governor-Generalship, he left prophesying that not a gun would be fired in India for many a year. How every effort was made to make the plan come true, and how the lure of the Indus was too great for everyone, will be told in the next chapter in the story of the Fifth and last War of this Victorian decade, in which the India of to-day was moulded.

THE FIFTH WAR. THE SECOND SIKH WAR

THE PUNJAB AND MOOLTAN

At Lahore
The "Durbar" Foiled
The Sudden Tragedy at Mooltan
The Story of Herbert Edwardes
General Whish moves on Mooltan
The Rebellion in the Punjab
The Formation of the British "Army of the Punjab"

AT LAHORE

It seemed for a while that the Treaty of Lahore had laid the foundations of a regime that might last. But there was an immense deal to be done by all concerned. The country was suffering from considerable apprehension and forcible collection of back revenue, and many districts were getting into a state of rebellion. The little Maharajah, however, was in good health, though his wicked mother had access to him. The good Henry Lawrence was a tower of strength and sympathy, and soon gained the genuine affection of all the honest men in the State.

Under the Treaty a force was to remain cantoned in Lahore at Sikh expense till the end of 1846, by which time it was estimated that the Sikh Army would be shaken to its new state, and the reorganization be well on its way. Across the Beas, Brigadier-General Wheeler was in military command, and in addition to the garrison a Frontier Force was being organized largely from the best old units of the Sikh Army, consisting of four regiments of Sikh Infantry drawn from all classes represented in the Khalsa Army. With them were two light field batteries. This force afterwards became the nucleus of the Punjab Irregular Force, later to be known as the Punjab Frontier Force.

Nevertheless there was plenty of trouble brewing

CHAPTER X

THE PUNJAB AND MOOLTAN

AT LAHORE

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beneath the surface, and the Sikh Durbar began to wonder how it could keep its head above water if the Subsidiary Force was withdrawn in the approaching December.

This force, under command of Sir John Littler, consisted of two brigades of infantry, of one British and eight Indian Corps, a wing of cavalry with one horse and two field batteries; in fact, a fairly strong division for those days.

The first rift within the lute was not long coming. In the month of May, Sheikh Immamuddin, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, refused to hand the province over to Gulab Singh. The Resident at once called on the Durbar to enforce their orders, and we then see the remarkable sight of the just-beaten and barely re-organized Sikh Army setting out for Kashmir by the Pir Panjal and the old Mogul *chaussée* to compel their servant to hand over part of their territory to another. It speaks volumes for the British prestige and the Sikh understanding of the genuine wish of the British to support the new Sikh State, that they marched off cheerfully. Wheeler with a small force moved to the foot of the Pir Panjal, that is to say the snowy range that separates Kashmir from the Punjab, to their support. Henry Lawrence with his assistant, Lieutenant John Nicholson, was with the Sikh Army, which marched on by themselves over the snow. When he saw that they and Lawrence meant business, the recalcitrant Governor announced that he would cease to resist his formal orders, but informed Lawrence that he was but carrying out secret orders that he had had from Lal Singh, the Minister. He was informed that if he could prove his allegation he would be pardoned.

Immamuddin had made a very serious statement and Lawrence at once informed the Durbar that this charge

must be the subject of a trial. Lal Singh was accordingly brought before a Special Court, who found him guilty, but acquitted any others of the Council of Regency. The British Government then directed that Lal Singh should be exiled to British India, where they would provide for him. It was recognized that the action of the Sikh troops and Sirdars in advancing to Kashmir had proved the genuineness of the Durbar's intention. The Governor-General now saw that he must either leave the Punjab to itself, or take a stronger hand, especially as the whole country was seething with discontent against its Government. The Durbar, afraid of itself, besought the Governor-General not to remove the 'Subsidiary' Force, to use the Marquess Wellesley's old name. They felt that without it their positions were not worth a week's purchase, and all had a lively remembrance of the anarchy and murders of the last few years.

THE "DURBAR" PERIOD

The Governor-General refused to leave the troops unless the country was administered under British supervision. This all the Sikh leaders unanimously accepted, and the *Treaty of Bhairowal* was now signed by Lawrence and many Chiefs, and its terms were in accordance with their demands and wishes. The main purport was that while the Maharajah was in his minority, viz. till he was sixteen, there should be a Council of Regency of which the Resident was to be the head. He was to have full authority to interfere in the administration wherever he thought fit. The Ranee Jindan was to withdraw from all affairs of State, but to receive suitable allowances for her maintenance in proper state.

Henry Lawrence who had half a dozen remarkable

young men on his staff as Resident, was now to be given the pick of all the services, civil and military, to find young men to act as advisers to the Sikh Governors and generally help them clear up the danger, stop abuses, and steady their troops and levies. Never in the history of our Empire had such choice young men been collected. Across the Beas, was Henry's brother John Lawrence, the Indian civilian, who was in charge of the new British province.

The effect of these officers in the district was profound. Worshipped by the people, they even were fairly deep in the good books and affection of the very administrators whose rogueries it was their duty to curb. The Punjab steadied itself and the discontent began to die down. By 1847 Viscount Hardinge, as he now was, wrote to London of the Punjab, "Everything is perfectly quiet, and nothing has occurred worthy of remark." The only factor that might make for danger was that on the Indus the Sikh troops were largely those who had not met the British on the Sutlej and been humbled.

The young men were alert at their posts, especially in the difficult provinces on the Afghan border, but recently indeed taken from the Afghans, Herbert Edwardes in the Derajat, Reynel Taylor at Bannu, George Lawrence, the Resident's brother, in Peshawur; Herbert at Attock, John Nicholson in Hazara, all names that were household words in England as well as in India a couple of generations ago.

The Peshawur Valley was in a peculiarly difficult state. When General Avitabile with his famous brigade ruled in the Valley there was a gibbet at each corner of his garden, and they were rarely without a tassel. But Avitabile had been gone with his word and his blow, these four years, and George Lawrence wrote that the

people were in such despair that they would assuredly have risen had it not been for the prompt suppression of the Kashmir revolt.

There was some trouble at Lahore in February, 1847, when a plot to kill several members of the Durbar, and even the Resident himself was disclosed. The Ranee was of course in it, and she was sent to semi-confinement at Sheikhopura. Nevertheless, 1847 was a year of promise, when the general trend was all to the good. Henry Lawrence, whose health was bad, thought he might take leave, and Mr. Currie took his place. Lord Hardinge had gone Home also, and the Earl of Dalhousie had taken his place early in 1848.

Then, for no good reason, an incident occurred that was to upset all calculations, and which was to have astounding results. Up to now the position in Lahore had not been unlike that at Kabul in 1840. The Government we had set up could not carry on without us, and we were forced to remain. Unlike Kabul, when the trouble came there were men in charge who would not be "Cabuled!"

THE SUDDEN TRAGEDY AT MOOLTAN

After the Treaty of Bhairowal, signed at the end of 1846, the year 1847 passed away as related, reasonably quietly, Lawrence's young men feverishly at work with the local governors, who without the least wish on their part, were pushed along the path of equitable government and reasonably prompt administration. The province of Mooltan which had been wrested from the Afghans in 1819, only a year before Kashmir, was in a peculiar position. It had a population of Afghan-descended over-lords and landowners, with their lesser followers cultivating, a large number of ordinary Punjabi Moslem

peasantry of no very exalted clans and origins, and a certain number of Hindu cultivators. The city was full of traders, largely Hindus, who conducted the trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia. It was, and is, one of the most strategical points in India, as through it and on it converged all those passes from the direction of Ghuzni and Kandahar, and by which the real invasions of India had taken place in the past. The roads converged here because it lay below the junctions of several of the great rivers, which were thus turned, and it obviated the barren waterless routes which lay between the rivers before the British irrigation engineers appeared on the scene.

The Diwan of Mooltan province, or in other words its governor, farmed the revenue, That is to say, he paid so much down to the Central Government, and made what he could, a favourite Eastern method of Government. He had, however, been called to give an account of certain dues, and on this he asked to be relieved of his office, accounting for certain taxes that he had actually received, leaving the Durbar to collect the remainder. As, however, his contract was for three years, the Resident persuaded him to return and continue in office till March, 1848. All this seems trivial enough, but the results show how easily a small fire in the East may become a conflagration, as we saw in Peshawur in 1930, or in that terrible communal massacre at industrial Cawnpore in the same year.

In April of that year, Moolraj's successor a Sikh, proceeded to take over the province, and with him went Mr. Vans Agnew, one of the Resident's Staff, as political officer with the Governor, and Lieutenant Anderson of the Bombay European Regiment as his assistant. They were to see that all was in order, and that the new man should have a clean start. With the party went as escort

some of the reformed Sikh Army, consisting of a Gurkha regiment in the Sikh service, some guns and some horse. On 17th April, they arrived close to Mooltan, and the next day proceeded to the Eedgah outside the city where they were to stay. The Diwan paid them the ordinary formal call of courtesy, and requested Mr. Vans Agnew to inspect the fort, troops and stores. This he arranged to do on the 19th. It is very hot in Mooltan in April, and the two officers visited the fort in the early morning, with the new Diwan, Sirdar Khan Singh Man, taking with them two companies of Gurkhas and twenty-five troopers. The Diwan met them at the Kamar Kot gate of the fort. At the outer gate the sentry asked the Diwan what were his orders as to admitting European officers into the fort. The Diwan replied, "The Sahib is master." Here the Diwan suggested that the crowd of attendants should remain outside. Vans Agnew accordingly took in one company of Gurkhas, who he directed to take over the various posts from the Diwan's own local levies.

On leaving the fort Vans Agnew rode with Moolraj, and Anderson with the Sirdar Khan Singh Man. At the drawbridge a soldier thrust at Vans Agnew with a spear, wounding him slightly. Then the sepoy drew his sword and rushed at the Englishman, wounding him on the shoulder. Vans Agnew knocked the man down with his stick. Anderson was then attacked by Muhammadan soldiers with swords and wounded in five places. Moolraj, the moment the outrage occurred, rode ahead to the Amkhas, the place of audience, and it was seen that as the wounded officers were carried as best they could be to the Eedgah, his people were running out guns.

From the Eedgah the wounded Vans Agnew sent off three letters, one to the Nawab of the Muhammadan

State of Bahawalpore, one to General Van Courtland commanding the Sikh troops in the Derajat, the country on the borders of the Indus. The third he wrote to Diwan Moolraj to say, optimistically indeed, that he did not consider him to blame. The Diwan wrote to say that he was coming to see Vans Agnew, but did not, and the next day a gun from the fort fired at the Eedgah. The guns of the Sikh escort engaged those in the fort during all that day. At night the Diwan's troops attacked the Eedgah, and all the escort, including the artillery, went off to join them. The new Governor was made prisoner, the two English officers were barbarously murdered, their bodies exposed on the walls, and their heads cut off, and taken to Moolraj, while all their baggage was pillaged.

That was that; a distressing incident which might forfend anything. As soon as the Resident at Lahore heard the first news he called on Major-General Whish commanding at Lahore to take troops from Lahore and Ferozepore to rescue the British officers. When news of their murder came he countermanded their march. But it was necessary to crush Moolraj lest the rising spread. He therefore directed all the Sikh forces he could dispose of to march to the seat of rebellion, it being an act of rebellion against the authority of the Sikh Durbar. These at first consisted of the only available Sikh regiment and a field battery, with a large force of Irregulars. At the same time General Van Courtland, one of the old Sikh European officers, was ordered to take two battalions from Dera Ismael Khan, and a troop of horse artillery and march on Mooltan also.

On the 22nd, Currie reported to the Governor-General that the Sikh Government had put in motion against Mooltan, seven battalions of infantry, two regular

Cavalry regiments, three batteries, and some 1,200 Irregular horse. Mr. Currie also said that Moolraj was unpopular, and had few troops of his own, and only a few field-guns, but that the fort itself was very strong, and full of heavy cannon. He thought a prolonged siege would be necessary. He also wanted to send the troops in Lahore under Major-General Whish, and some more from Ferozepore, but the season of the year was getting very hot, and Gough feared heavy losses from climate, and so the despatch of British troops was, probably rightly, decided against.

At the same time it was pretty obvious that delay would involve loss of prestige to the British and give Moolraj time to strengthen himself.

THE STORY OF HERBERT EDWARDES

Then a fresh hand was taken and gallantly played. At Dera Fateh Khan on the Indus below Dera Ismael Khan, was Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes of the Bengal Fusiliers, representing the Resident on this part of the frontier. The letter written to General Courtland by Vans Agnew when wounded in the Eedgah, was brought him. Having read it, this young man decided to at once march on Mooltan with all the Durbar troops that he could muster, which amounted to 2 guns, 20 *zumburaks* (the camel guns already described), 350 troopers and 12 companies of infantry. He asked Reynel Taylor at Bannu to send a Moslem battalion from thence and four more horse artillery guns, by boat down river to Leia, a large town on the Punjab side of the Indus, to which he repaired. The news of the final tragedy, however, made him hesitate. The Sikh official in Leia, moreover, had already received orders from Moolraj to seize boats,

raise 3000 men and hold the place. The arrival of Edwardes stopped such action. The occupation of Leia was a blow to Moolraj. The Doab between the Chenab and the Indus was full of Baluchis and Pathans ripe for mischief. This Edwardes checked by enlisting them for the defence of Leia. He was, however, in no pleasant position. It would be a fortnight yet before any reinforcement of any value could arrive, and Moolraj's emissaries were at work among his troops.

But Edwardes was a man of daring and resource, and with him was a stout Mussalman chief of good family, one Faujdar Khan. He went on with his enlistments and stood his ground. On the 29th, Moolraj had sent forth 4000 men against him, who should reach Leia about the 1st May. Of several courses open, he preferred that of recrossing the Indus and there awaiting his reinforcements. While waiting he then cleared the Sikh troops from various forts trans-Indus, putting in his own frontier levies.

By the 16th May, Edwardes learnt that Moolraj's troops, now between 6000 and 7000 with 15 guns, were advancing again on Leia. Edwardes who for the present was in charge of all the operations of the Sikh Government to prevent Moolraj's rebellion spreading, now ordered Bahawal Khan, the Chief of Bahawalpore, to bring his troops across the Sutlej below Mooltan. Moolraj's advanced guard at Leia was defeated, which impressed the country-side, and by the end of the first week in June the whole of the trans-Indus portion of the province was clear. Having cleverly forestalled Moolraj, Edwardes got possession of all the former's boats and was able to bring his entire force across the Indus. Lieutenant Lake of the Engineers had been sent by the Resident from Lahore to join the Bahawalpore forces and

support Edwardes. That young officer, still a subaltern, thus found himself alone in charge of wide-reaching and considerable combinations, with many thousand men under his orders, including General Van Courtland (whose rank was Sikh rank), and a fair proportion of Mussalman troops, as well as a Hindustani corps in the Sikh service, which had thrown itself whole-heartedly onto the British and Durbar side.

Eventually Edwardes, seeing that the British Government was not prepared at that season to send troops, and thought that the Sikh Durbar with all its reformed troops should settle its own hash, decided to advance on Mooltan, and beard Moolraj in his own stronghold. The various combinations and counter-moves that had been going on, do not concern us here, remarkable though they were, but suffice it to say that by the 16th June, eight weeks after the Mooltan tragedy, Edwardes was advancing from the Indus to the Chenab, and making for Kineri Ferry, and that the Bahawalpore troops were further down the Chenab on the left bank of that river, Moolraj was also moving to oppose Edwardes crossing that river. On the 17th the Daudputras, the "Sons of David" as the Bahawalpore race was called, were advancing close on to Kineri by Edwardes' direction, to cover the ferrying of his force across. As he was crossing the ferry he heard the sound of guns and proceeded thereto, to find the Bahawalpore force drawn up and anxious to engage Moolraj's troops. He persuaded them to wait awhile till his own guns and troops were across. All was ready towards three o'clock, and a severe battle between the three forces took place in front of the Kineri Ferry. After really heavy cannonading and a gallant hand-to-hand fight the Sikh force was defeated with, it is said, the loss of 500 dead left on the field. Edwardes lost 58 killed and 89 wounded, and the Bahawalpore

casualties were about 100. Out of 7000 rebels only 3000 could be mustered after a headlong flight to Mooltan, 46 miles away.

In reporting this remarkable success to the Government, we find the Resident congratulating himself on the success of the converging operations and marches that he had directed towards Mooltan. He also relates how anxious he was to clear up Mooltan, as all the Sikh Army between Lahore and Peshawur were watching. But he now pointed out that neither the Sikh troops proper nor the Durbar officials, for all their protests, were giving any assistance, that Sher Singh and some other Sirdars taking a force to Mooltan now alone of all the Sikh Sirdars could be trusted. It was, in fact, the Moslem troops and levies, and the few British with them alone, who were making this headway.

This made Lord Dalhousie realize how perilous the position was like to be. In the meantime, Herbert Edwardes with the Daudputras, his levies from the Derajat, and Van Courtland's regulars, after some more manœuvring, actually approached Mooltan from the south-west, and fought another major action on the deep Suraj Khund Canal. Edwardes now commanded some 18,000 men, his assistants being Lieutenant Lake, Van Courtland, and certain young Europeans and Eurasians, including young Quin, his own clerk, Captain Mcpherson of the Bahawalpore service, one of the Lumsdens, and one or two more. Edwardes had now 22 guns of varying merit, and he proceeded to engage the force which Moolraj himself had led out on the 1st July against him at Sadusain on the canal.

The result was a very complete victory over Moolraj, who could muster only 11 guns, and the rebel leader fled to the city after very heavy losses. Edwardes' side only suffered some 281 casualties, and the exulting levies

followed the flying Sikhs up to the very walls of the city of Mooltan.

Sher Singh with some regular troops and about 3000 Sikh Irregulars then completed his leisurely progress and joined Edwardes.

And now we find Edwardes excelling himself in enthusiasm, as well he might. He asked the Resident to send him some siege guns, with Major Napier (the Lord Napier of Magdala) to direct the siege, the latter at this time being engaged in organizing roads in the Punjab. Napier himself for the moment thought that a Brigade of British Infantry with the guns would suffice. But Lord Gough had already prohibited the despatch of siege guns unescorted, if they were to be his guns, as he very naturally considered they might be but a present to rebels, past or future. When Currie called for a brigade he was not disposed to allow that to go either in the appalling heat, until the whole policy to be followed, and the eventualities on the horizon had been fully discussed. If British troops were to take the field against Sikh troops they must go properly led in a season in which operations were possible. He and his staff realized that the unbeaten Sikh troops of the North might still be hard to tackle. Also, as will be explained, the Army had been so reduced that it could not take the field promptly if more trouble arose.

GENERAL WHISH MOVES ON MOOLTAN

Eventually, however, the matter was taken out of the hands of the politicals who were only competent to handle their own levies, and Gough and the Governor-General themselves did order General Whish to comply with the Resident's wishes, take a brigade of cavalry and two of infantry from Lahore and Ferozepore

(Whish's Force) and take charge of the operations and the Sikh troops, as well as those of Herbert Edwardes.[1]

The European troops moved down the Ravi and the Sutlej by boat with the siege train, and the Indian troops marched down the banks by night as the heat of the day was formidable.

On arrival Whish found that Herbert Edwardes had already broken ground on the south side, and he arranged to join him there, the Lahore and Ferozepore Columns concentrating at a camp two and a half miles east of the city on 18th August, four months after the Vans Agnew tragedy. To enable Edwardes to be near Whish the former had changed camp with Sher Singh, who was now on the left of the Line on the south side.

How to attack the city and fort which was really the citadel, had still to be settled. The city was surrounded by high walls, defended by bastioned towers, the whole embrasured and loopholed, of that massive mud which is so hard to breach, and so easy to mend. The citadel, also of mud, towered above the city on some ancient mound, and was not unlike the citadel of Ghuzni. General Whish who had been at the siege of Bhurtpore, likened it to that hard nut which as a gunner he had helped to crack. Lawrence, who should have known better, said it was feeble. It was, as a matter of fact,

[1] Order of Battle:

Cavalry Brigade. Brigadier Salter.	7th and 11th Irregular Cavalry. 11th Light Cavalry.
1st Infantry Brigade. Brigadier Hervey.	10th Foot. 8th and 52nd Bengal N.I.
2nd Infantry Brigade. Brigadier Markham.	32nd Foot. 49th, 51st and 72nd Bengal N.I.

Two troops H.A. Four companies Foot Artillery.

Two companies Bengal Sappers. Three companies Pioneers.

very hard to take if there was any sort of determined defence.

After a conference, Whish decided that though the proper way to set about the job was from the north and north-east, yet the political state of the Punjab did demand an attempt to seize the place by a *coup de main.* He decided, therefore, to attack from the south side, where the enemy had a line of entrenchments outside the suburbs, carry these and then breach the Khuni Burj, or 'Bloody Tower,' of the city enceinte.

On the 6th the siege train arrived, and on the 4th Whish summoned the place to surrender next day, proclaiming that it was no longer an affair of the Sikh Durbar, but that of the British Government. As no response was received, the first parallel to take the outer works was begun on the 6th, despite the great heat. After several lesser attacks, the outer line was carried, not without the considerable loss of 255 officers and men, on the 12th September, the enemy having their defending troops practically wiped out, leaving close on 500 dead on the ground.

Then something very unexpected happened, but which changed the whole aspect of the case.

On the 14th Sher Singh, who had hitherto taken his share in the attacks, and turned his guns on the citadel, marched off and joined Moolraj, taking up a position in a big walled enclosure on the far side of the city. Whish, after consulting Napier, agreed that to proceed with the siege in the face of such a transfer was no longer feasible. He therefore withdrew his force several miles to the scene of Edwardes' victory at Sadusain, whence he could cover his communications with Bombay, the trans-Indus, and by the rivers with Lahore and Ferozepore. Besides native boats he had a steamer of the new Indus Flotilla.

The inundated state of the country round had hampered all the operations, and that and the heavy heat with the high wet bulb made an attempt to treat Sher Singh as he deserved also hard to encompass.

It is to be noticed that the defection of Sher Singh had largely in this part of the Punjab produced a struggle of Moslem versus Sikh—the latter religion being in some sort a Hindu variant.

THE REBELLION IN THE PUNJAB

What reasoning folk had long foretold had now come to pass. The effort to set up a Sikh Government on behalf of the child Maharajah at Lahore had failed, had, in fact, tumbled in ruins about the heads of all concerned. Not, however, that it can be said that anyone was to blame. It was just one of the inevitable things that happen.

When Viscount Hardinge left India he had declared his belief that not a gun would be fired in India for many a long year. Because of the great expenses of the Gwalior Campaign and the First Sikh War, coming as they did on the top of the three years of the Afghan wars, economy was imperative. To gain this, Lord Hardinge, among other measures, had discharged all the carriage, and sold the Government animals. He had refrained, with his soldier's instinct from dissolving cadres, but he had reduced the peace establishments of all corps very considerably. That was a right and statesmanlike act to do; had he thought of the modern reserve system, and transferred his surplus men to a realizable reserve, all might have been well. But the men had simply gone.

Lord Gough knowing the state of affairs, and that he

had no transport; knowing, too, where Mooltan and the Whish expedition might lead them, urged the Governor-General to be allowed to entertain carriage, without which not a man could move—it was 1848, and not a mile of railway—and to re-enlist as many as possible of the discharged men so that his battalions and regiments might once again be at war establishment.

Lord Dalhousie was a great and a modern-minded man, for all his youth and his pig-headed ways. He was something of a soldier, having served in the 79th Highlanders. He wanted to stir India to modern progress in agriculture, in transport, and in all the ways of the humanities; he wanted telegraphs and railways, and colleges and institutes and roads. But these are things with which military expenditure and a restricted revenue clash. He was therefore for a while adamant. The Commander-in-Chief was in the position of knowing that it was odds on big trouble at any moment, and yet aware that he would not be in the position to do any of the things demanded of him. The poor Commander-in-Chief in India nine years later, when the Bengal Army mutinied, was in the same miserable position, but with this difference, that while the mutiny was a bolt from the blue, the Sikh rising, almost a national movement, was, to revert to expressive slang, already "sticking out a mile."

The defection of Sher Singh and his troops from the force before Mooltan has been recorded, and we must now turn to the happenings which gave cause to that defection. It certainly brought Lord Dalhousie to listen to Lord Gough.

It has always seemed probable that Moolraj was the victim of circumstances. That the murders of Vans Agnew and Anderson, and all the indignities shown to their remains, was not premeditated, but that when

they had happened he thought himself too far implicated to be able to explain himself, and so he went into the rebellion at full steam. He must have written to all and sundry to rise, and urged the Khalsa, the Army of the Elect, and the Elect and pure people, to rise once more for their freedom. The Sirdars who were in office all over the country, knew very well that the clever and active young representatives of the Resident were curtailing, by the very fact of their presence, the roguery and chicanery, the oppression of peasant and trader, by which in the past all Eastern officials have made their pile.

The poor and oppressed were beginning to see daylight, but the officials and governors saw none of their point of view. The unbeaten portion of the Army thought they could still win, while those men of the regiments who had come under reduction were often sore enough. Moolraj had now defied the ineffective Durbar and its guide, the Resident, for four months, and he was beginning to be a national hero, though not a Sikh, and to dream of perhaps starting a government. He wrote to Dost Muhammed promising the return of some of the districts the Sikhs had taken in return for assistance. The pot therefore was stewing merrily, and there was no news of the British Army collecting its carriage, its transport that alone could make it mobile.

In the beautiful district of Hazara, abutting on Kashmir and the Indus, Sirdar Chattar Singh, the father of Sher Singh, was Governor. It being a frontier province, he had plenty of troops. George Lawrence at Attock was the principal representative of the Resident, and in Hazara itself was Major Abbott. Chattar Singh was not long in starting "trying it on" in a dozen lesser ways. Some of the troops there had packed all

their baggage, and were said to be ready to march on Lahore. Abbott raised the country-side and blocked the road through the hills with Moslem levies. Chattar Singh ordered an American officer in the Sikh service, a Colonel Canora, to march his guns to force the road to Lahore. He refused, and was murdered in his gun park by his own men—a gallant American defying the whole battery! Chattar Singh now threw off the mask and summoned all the Sikh regiments within hail to join him. The whole of the country-side, on the other hand, almost all Moslems, all recently conquered between 1820 and 1837, were with the British officers to a man. Chattar Singh besought the Dost to come down and expel the British officers from the Peshawur Valley, which he offered him in return. John Nicholson threw levies into Attock Fort, and raised the militia on the pass between Hazara and Rawalpindi. This cowed the Sikh awhile, yet Mooltan still held out, and on the 14th, as we have seen, Sher Singh joined the rebels.

The Sikh garrisons of Peshawur and Bannu now rose, and marched off to India. The British officers in Peshawur, rode to Kohat, then an Afghan province, where the Governor, one of the Barakzai brothers, offered them asylum, eventually, Afghan-like, delivering them up to the Sikhs. At Bannu the troops, after murdering the Governor, Fateh Khan Tiwana, and Colonel John Holmes, a half-bred Durbar officer, crossed the Indus at Isa Khel, and marched for the Punjab, murdering Moslems *en route*, and thus foolishly turning all the Moslem population against them. By the last week in October practically every Sikh unit beyond the Ravi was in rebellion, and the fat was properly in the fire. The Dost was actually sending one of his brothers with 5000 Afghan Horse to take a share, the first and the last time that ever saw Sikh and Afghan hand-in-

hand. Their crossing the Indus, however, did not please the people, whose memories were very green of the terrible days of the earlier Afghan comings.

THE FORMATION OF THE BRITISH "ARMY OF THE PUNJAB"

During these trying days the politicals were calling for British brigades to be sent here, there and everywhere, to all of which demands Lord Dalhousie and the Commander-in-Chief turned a deaf ear. War there was going to be, and concentrated and not frittered troops were what the situation demanded. Early in September the Governor-General, too, had seen clearly that there was no way out. It was not till then that Lord Dalhousie agreed to the concentration of a force which, including the Mooltan wing, should number 25,000 men.

When the news came of Sher Singh's defection, Gough ordered another Bengal brigade to join Whish, and also ordering Cureton's Cavalry Brigade to cross the Sutlej and reinforce Lahore. On the 30th September Gough was also authorized to recruit his corps to war establishment, and also to summon troops to Mooltan from Sind and Bombay. The field army was to be called "The Army of the Punjab," and was to consist of a Cavalry Division of four brigades, commanded by Brigadier Cureton, a remarkable officer, who had risen from the ranks, the 1st Division, under Major-General Whish, i.e. the force now at Mooltan, the 2nd Division, under Major-General Sir Walter Gilbert, the 3rd Division, Major-General Sir Joseph Thackwell, who we have hitherto seen as Cavalry leader. The Artillery, under Brigadier Tennant to be attached to the divisions as required, consisted of 8 H.A. troops, 3 light field batteries, and 8

companies of Foot Artillery, with the siege and heavier guns.[1]

This order of battle was very soon amended, for various reasons. In the first instance Brigadier Cureton, when pushed across the Sutlej, was to take command of all corps across that river until the war formations were ready, and he soon pushed across the Ravi to cover Lahore from the north, taking up a position some six miles ahead. The Governor-General wrote to the Resident that as the present movement had as its avowed subject not only the expulsion of the British influence from the Punjab, but from all India, he hoped that the force assembling at Ferozepore would be able to destroy the various Sikh forces which were endeavouring to unite.

Before Lord Dalhousie had left Calcutta to be nearer the scene of action, speaking at a public dinner, he said, "The Sikh people have chosen war, and by God!

[1] Order of Battle:

1st Cavalry Brigade. Brigadier White.	3rd Light Dragoons, 5th and 8th Lt. Cavalry.
2nd Brigade. As with General Whish.	
3rd Brigade. Brigadier Pope.	9th Lancers. 1st and 6th Lt. Cavalry.
4th Cavalry Brigade. Brigadier Hearsey.	3rd, 9th and 12th Irregular Cavalry.
2nd Division.	
3rd Brigade. Brigadier Eckford.	29th Foot. 31st and 56th Bengal N.I.
4th Brigade. Brigadier Godby.	2nd Bengal Europeans. 4th and 70th Bengal N.I.
5th Bigade. Brigadier Hervery.	13th, 30th and 52nd Bengal N.I.
3rd Division.	
6th Brigade. Brigadier Pennycuick.	24th Foot, 15th and 25th Bengal N.I.
7th Brigade. Brigadier Penny.	20th, 22nd and 69th Bengal N.I.

gentlemen, they shall have it"—the only spirit in which to meet a quarrel that has been forced on one.

On the 9th November Lord Gough of the Sutlej, as he now was, led the Army of the Punjab over that river *en route* to Lahore, where it arrived once again on the 13th. On the 16th he crossed the Ravi, and as evil-disposed persons were busy making all the mischief they could, the Resident now issued a proclamation to the people of the Punjab, explaining the British action, and assuring all those not engaged in the rebellion, of British protection.

Sher Shing himself had by now gathered many of the various rebel bodies to himself, and was on the Chenab opposite Ramnagar, some twenty-five miles down-stream, of the actual crossing of that river by the main road to the north at Wazirabad, and on an alternative from Lahore to Jhelum. There he hoped to be joined by his father, Chattar Singh, who had been amusing himself besieging Attock, in which Nicholson had left Lieutenant Herbert with some Mussalman levies, and also by no less a person than Dost Muhammad, Amir of Kabul.

Down in the south, General Whish was still observing Moolraj, waiting for the troops from Bombay and Sind, but on the 9th October Sher Singh marched away from his position outside the northern face of Mooltan. Whish, who had received one more brigade, thought that he could now invest the city properly without waiting for the rest of his force.

On the 1st November Moolraj had actually ventured out from his defences, and taken up a position from whence he could fire on the British at Sadusain. On the 7th Whish sent a strong force under Markham to attack the enemy outside Mooltan, with which Edwardes and Lake now co-operated. The Sikhs were heavily defeated after some brilliant work, losing 5 guns, the British



THE SECOND SIKH WAR

The charge of the 14th Light Dragoons at Ramnagar ford on the Chenab River, November 22nd, 1848.

having 61, and the Allies 211 casualties. The British Force and Allies was then disposed to invest the city, but until the Bombay column marched in on the 22nd December, no active siege was begun. This body consisted of a troop of H.A., two light field batteries, 2 companies of Foot Artillery, 2 companies of Sappers, 2 Indian Cavalry corps, 2 British and 4 Indian battalions; in fact, in the grouping of that period, another Cavalry brigade and an Infantry division.

However unsatisfactory the long delay before Mooltan was, it had the effect of preventing all the rebel forces concentrating before Gough. The term "rebel" may fairly be used since at Lahore was the Maharajah, the only son of the founder of the Sikh Kingdom, with the only possible form of Government, entirely outside the movement.

We will leave General Whish before Mooltan until his reinforcing division comes up, and follow Lord Gough in the operations earlier and battles which excited so much controversy, and so much gallant and desperate fighting before it came to what the wags of the day called the "Crowning Mercy" of Goojerat, old Cromwell's phrase for the Battle of Dunbar.

CHAPTER XI

RAMNAGAR AND CHILLIANWALLAH

THE ADVANCE TO THE CHENAB AND RAMNAGAR

We now come to the famous occasions of this fifth and unsought Victorian war, occasions which produced fierce controversies, and did not conduce to the military fame of Lord Gough. They brought undying glory to the European corps engaged, but in the case of Chillianwallah gave rise to scenes of great distress and pathos, which a little better tactical handling should have reduced to a minimum. They also conclude with the dramatic episode of the Sikh Army beaten once and for all, laying down its arms to the British Army in line, to the pursuit of the impudent Afghans to the Khaiber, the final storming of Mooltan and the carrying of the exhumed bodies of Vans Agnew and Anderson to their final resting-place in the citadel—through the captured Gateways? Oh, no! High on the shoulders of the stormers by the breach that the guns had torn and up the rubble slopes and debris. That is how soldiers when stirred, honour their dead and mark their sense of how to wipe out a dastard occasion.

We have seen in the last chapter, Lord Gough at the head of his Army, cheered, beloved, and not always quite trusted, marching hard for Lahore and pushing on over the Ravi, the Hydraotis[1] of the Macedonian legend, and come to the Chenab. There Cureton, now strengthened

[1] The name *Ravi* is probably the basis of this.

by Colin Campbell's Infantry Brigade, was watching the fords at Ramnagar over that river.

Now was about to occur a sharp engagement which was also to be the subject of much controversy, especially among the men of the cavalry sabre.

On the 16th November, the two old soldiers of Wellington's training school, advanced with due caution to Saharan, a village eight miles from the Ravi, and the Ramnagar fords and ferry. The Chenab has an immensely wide bed to carry off the melted snow-water of the Himalaya and the mountains even of China after which it is named, *Chin-ab* the "Waters of Chin." But in the winter it consists of one shrunken main channel and varying lesser ones, constantly changing, amid sandbanks and sifting sands and here and there a quicksand. Rain in the hills will vary at any unexpected moment the depth of fords.

The enterprising Sher Singh had pushed a strong detachment to Ramnagar, three miles on the hither side of the river. On the 21st, Lord Gough had brought the main army to within four miles of Cureton's station, and ordered him and Campbell to march next morning towards Ramnagar, he himself accompanying them to reconnoitre. He was, in fact, about to make a reconnaissance in force, and he and they marched off at 3 a.m., the main army following at its leisure and eventually took up a position at Ramnagar as spectators of the fight on the river-bank. When Cureton had reached the higher ground which lay to the right of the town of Ramnagar, he saw that the Sikhs had withdrawn their guns to their main encampment on the opposite bank, while their rear parties were retiring from the town. He now ordered Lane's and Warner's troops of horse artillery to pursue and fire on them as they crossed. In their eagerness to get a good view and shot at them, the H.A. troops got into

very heavy sand on the banks, but struggled into action and punished the enemy considerably. Their movement soon brought them under the fire of 28 of the Sikh guns on the opposite bank, of much heavier metal, who were on the steep west bank opposite, and the Sikhs now sent some horse back to help their comrades. These the escort with the guns attacked, and in trying to support the 5th cavalry, Lane got one of his guns and two ammunition-wagons embedded in the sand behind a bank, close to the enemy's guns, and they could not be got away. The Sikhs now crossed a large force of cavalry and some infantry said to be eventually three or four thousand. Gough himself ordered the 14th Light Dragoons to attack them and they, led by their eager colonel, Havelock, dashed forward. Cureton knew that there were hidden reserves close by and galloped forward also, to save the 14th, but was shot through the heart. Gough had now also seen the folly of interfering and sent an A.D.C. to stop the Dragoons. Too late! They were now in among a large force of the enemy, Lieutenant-Colonel Havelock commanding the 14th and another officer[1] and 23 men were killed, while 9 officers and 49 men were wounded. The 3rd Light Dragoons and the 5th and 8th Light Cavalry also made repeated attacks. The abandoned gun was spiked during these charges. The Sikhs lost far more heavily, being driven into the river and many drowned. Among the casualties was a wonderful old Indian officer, Sirdar Bahadur Resaldar-Major Mir Sher Ali of the 8th Light Cavalry, who was seventy-eight years of age and had sixty years service.[2]

[1] Brother of Henry Havelock.

[2] There died in March, 1932, in England, Trooper Sergeant-Major Stratford of the 14th Light Dragoons, who had taken part in this charge, in the battle of Chillianwallah which followed, and had also ridden with his regiment in the pursuit of the Afghans to the Khaiber after the final victory of Googerat. He had seen 104 years, this stout old veteran, before he piled his arms.

That was the end of this impetuous action, brought on, however, solely by the not unnatural despatch of the horse artillery to fire on the retreating Sikhs. The impetuosity which took them into heavy sand without a reconnoitring party ahead was responsible for the loss of a gun, which did not matter in the least, and in the return of the Sikh horse, who did thus entice our cavalry under their guns. The Sikhs, however, lost heavily, and the *élan* that was displayed cannot but have been to the good. At the same time, as Lord Gough's purpose of forcing the Sikhs over Chenab had been accomplished, there was not much gained in disturbing the hornets' nest ahead.

The 14th Hussars, who were once Light Dragoons, celebrate Ramnagar day to this day.

The obvious lesson was, for all time, that higher commanders should be very chary in interfering in the tactical handling of a subordinate's command.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RIVER OF CHINA

We now come to the interesting operation of crossing a difficult river in the face of a strong enemy who held the fords with plenty of guns. The forcing of the Ramnagar crossing was out of the question with all the Sikh guns entrenched on the high western banks, and the obvious thing was for the British to hold this crossing, and turn the enemy's flank by a passage elsewhere, effected by a manœuvre which should baffle the enemy. This Gough decided to do. There was a ford seven miles upstream at Garhi, reported to be strongly held by the enemy, and five miles further were two close together at Ranni Khan and Ali Sher Ki Chak, while on the main North Road at Wazirabad was another, this latter being twenty miles above Ramnagar. To cross at one of these,

attack Sher Singh in flank, clear the Ramnagar fords and cross the rest of the force there, with all its transport, was Lord Gough's quite reasonable plan.

With Cureton's unfortunate death, the command of the cavalry division was vacant, and as Sir Joseph Thackwell had commanded the cavalry at Maharajpore and at the battles of the Sutlej Campaigns, the Commander-in-Chief directed him to take over this command once more. At the same time he made him his formal Second-in-Command, though quite what functions appertain to such a post, except to understudy your chief's plans, are not quite clear. It is not a position recognized to-day.

Having made this adjustment Gough then decided to send him off with a strong force to get across as outlined.

This will bring us to the action of Sadoolapore in which a magnificent fighting occasion was lost, partly because the Chief's orders were contradictory, and partly, perhaps, because Sir Joseph, who was not so young as when a cavalry leader in the years gone by, may have had "the slows," a complaint which comes to many with *anno domini*. At any rate he should have known enough to have acted contrary to his orders under the circumstances, knowing as he did the object which his Chief wanted him to attain.

The force detailed to accompany him was a brigade of cavalry with two irregular regiments attached, and three brigades of infantry with five mobile troops and batteries and a couple of 18-pounders, "a deuced handy little force, by Gad!" in the metaphor of the day. With it also were the useful adjuncts of two companies of pioneers and a pontoon train for bridge or ferry.

His first instructions were perfectly clear. He was to march to Ranni Khan and if that were strongly held to march on to Wazirabad. He was to avoid night-

marching, and if he was not across the river and opposite the enemy's left by 1 p.m., he was to defer attack till the next day. Gough seemingly remembered the disaster and waste due to fighting late in a winter's afternoon.

Narrow sandy roads prevented Thackwell appearing opposite Ranni Khan before 11 a.m. on the 1st December, the early start intended having been thrown back by Colin Campbell losing his way. Both this ford and Ali Sher Ki Chak, a mile up, were held by the enemy, the terrain was unsuitable to force a crossing, and the ford itself uncertain. Cautious old Campbell, whose nickname when he was Commander-in-Chief in 1858, was "Old Khabardar," i.e. "Old Take Care," advised Thackwell to return to Ramnagar. Thackwell, however, knew that after all his orders to get across were quite clear and at 2 p.m. set out for Wazirabad, sending John Nicholson and his Pathan levies with two sapper officers on ahead to reconnoitre the fords. At 5 p.m. when the leading troops marched up, Nicholson had collected seventeen big boats and staked out two fords. The enemy were not *en evidence.* The water was nowhere more than 3 feet 10 inches, and at daybreak a third ford could be staked. Darkness was coming on, and the sandbanks and channels most confusing, but it was essential to be established on the other side in case the enemy should march up. The 3rd Brigade was sent off to the ferry three-quarters of a mile above the fords and the 6th Brigade tried to cross by the two staked fords. Darkness had now come on, and it failed to get across the last channel, spending the night on a sandbank. Three squadrons of irregular cavalry horse got over with the loss of three troopers. An enemy ambuscade would have played mischief; however, happily all was quiet. It was a bitterly cold night and apparently the usual failure to have fighting rations with the units prevailed. That was

nothing to do with the Commissariat, but with the regimental and brigade *bund-o-bust*.[1]

Next morning all the force got over, save that the pontoon train could not make a bridge, and with the 18-pounders were sent back to Gough under a strong escort. By 2 p.m. the force was over and fed and started off down river towards the Ramnagar fords in battle order, the brigades each in line of company columns at half-distance, with the Cavalry Brigade in similar order on the right, the 12th Irregulars on the left among the broken ground near the river. By dusk they had reached Durawal, twelves miles from the crossing, and there went into bivouac. That day, the 2nd December. Lord Gough having heard that Thackwell was across, approached the ford at Ramnagar and opened fire on the Sikh position, but only a few guns replied, which he could not silence. He believed that this cannonade compelled Sher Singh to shift his camp, but it is probable that the news of Thackwell's advance caused him to leave a guard on the ford and form to face the new danger. In the meantime, Brigadier Godby and the pontoon train endeavoured to get across six miles above Ramnagar near Garhi.

THE COUP MANQUÉ OF SÁDOOLAPORE

On the 3rd, Thackwell moved off at dawn in the same array and hoped to have reconnoitred the enemy and attacked them by 11 a.m. When he arrived four miles from the enemy he received a letter from the Commander-in-Chief saying that reinforcements were reaching him via Garhi, and a little later an order not to attack till a brigade of infantry and another of cavalry

[1] *Bund-o-bust*—the invaluable Persian phrase of India for "arrangements."

reached him via that crossing. This made it necessary to secure the trans-Chenab side of the ford which the Sikhs had abandoned but which they were now sending troops to secure again, and these had to be driven off. The wait for these reinforcements lost time, and Thackwell, who was at the village of Sadoolapore, was impatiently waiting and watching the day go by with his outposts now occupying villages to his front. About two o'clock large bodies of the enemy were seen to be advancing, but hidden to a great extent by the dense sugar-cane surrounding the villages. The British infantry then deployed after changing ground to get an open space in front of their line. The Sikhs, thinking this movement was a retreat, now came on and opened a heavy artillery fire, while their horse tried to turn the British right, only, however, to be sharply repulsed by the 1st Cavalry Brigade. As soon as the Sikh infantry came within sight and range, a heavy artillery fire was opened on them which brought their movement to a halt. After a cannonade of two hours, Thackwell ordered the cavalry to take the guns, but this failed as they could not find any opening that would allow of a charge, and as it was now dusk, and too late to attack the Sikhs strongly posted in the villages from which they had driven the British outposts, Sir Joseph lay on his arms till daylight. This affair had cost the British some 70 casualties and a loss of between 40 and 50 horses, but the infantry had hardly fired a shot.

In the meantime the Commander-in-Chief remained inactive during the time Thackwell was facing the Sikhs on the 3rd. About midnight, from the barking of dogs, it seemed that the enemy was moving off. By morning it was found that they were gone, as also the force opposite Ramnagar. Gough sent the 9th Lancers and 14th Light Dragoons over the fords in pursuit, while

Thackwell also moved after them, but the enemy were gone clean away and were marching as hard as they could to the Jhelum to effect a junction with Chattar Singh and the Afghan contingent. Thackwell pushed on ahead for some miles to give plenty of room at the fords of Ramnagar where on the 8th, Gough moved the whole army across. The enemy had marched off too fast for him to get in touch with them in the scrub country involved. Nevertheless the passage of the Chenab had been secured, and secured so far as that went, in a masterly way, all things considered. But the failure of Thackwell to attack the enemy at Sadoolapore, stuck in Lord Gough's gizzard badly. Thackwell had some difficulty in explaining what was perfectly true, that it was His Lordship's own precise orders that stopped him, futile orders, too, since Godby's crossing at Garhi took a very long time and neither of the two promised brigades turned up. It was entirely Gough's own fault by sending orders that precisely said what he did not mean! On the other hand, having got his whole force across, in touch with the enemy and well fed and in fighting trim, Thackwell could very well have ignored his clogging secondary orders, and carried out his main attack. He would probably have inflicted a heavy defeat on the Sher Singh. As it was, what it had been hoped to avoid had come to pass—the whole of the Sikh forces were now free to amalgamate.

That in outline is the much-debated fiasco of Sadoolapore, succeeding to a very good crossing and outmanœuvring of the Sikhs. It enhanced no one's military reputation. Thackwell's troops were proportionately scornful and exasperated, for, with the successful crossing of the river after hard marching, they looked to reap the fruit. One cannot refrain from noticing, how with the modern services of communication, let alone air

reconnaissance, such misunderstandings are things of the past; on the other hand, modern appliances have brought other difficulties peculiarly their own and far worse.

THE ADVANCE TO CHILLIANWALLAH

The stage is now nearly set for the first of the two battles which smashed the Sikh Army for ever, and as we are leaving the flat plains of the Punjab to enter hilly country and also the scene of one of the Old World's greatest dramas, a description of the geography will not be out of place.

Sher Singh had retired from the ford of Ramnagar for some twenty-five miles to Rasool, a town on the next and most northerly of the five rivers, the Jhelum, which the Greeks called the Hydaspes. Between the Indus and Rasool for 110 miles, lies the famous mountain range of raw rugged red mountains known as the Salt Range, from the fact that much of its rock is salt. It contains some of the finest of the martial and manly peasantry and landowners of India. From Rasool, with a somewhat north-easterly bend the range continues bare and rugged as ever, but not so lofty, to meet the foot-hills of the Pir Panjal in the Jammu territory. At Rasool, however, the Jhelum, on its way from Kashmir to join the Chenab and ultimately the Indus, has cut its way through the Salt Range in a series of steep gorges. Some four miles further down the Jhelum is the village of Moong, opposite Jalalpur. Now it was somewhere behind Rasool that Alexander crossed the river by a detour finding the fords at Moong held by King Porus. He crossed and Porus formed to the east to meet him as Sher Singh had formed to meet Thackwell, and then had been fought the great fight on the same ground as that on which Gough was to fight.

The country between Ramnagar and Rasool was flat enough, but largely covered with mimosa, jungle and the *bhir*, with open spaces and clearings at intervals. The road from the Ramnagar fords lay via Helan to Dinghi, and thence north to Khori on the hills, or half-left to Rasool. At Dinghi, too, the Rasool-Wazirabad road crossed the Ramnagar-Khori road.

For the best part of a month Gough lay at Helan, some six miles beyond the Chenab, restrained partly by the definite instructions of the Governor-General, partly because he would have preferred to wait for the Mooltan force to join him, not realizing how long that force would be in coming. The Governor-General, who was now at Ludhiana, was indeed not quite logical, and he was not really concerned, as he professed to be, in the supply situation. That was Gough's business, unless indeed Dalhousie mistrusted him and his staff. But My Lord was one of the "busy" kind with a desire for a finger in every pie.

Gough was a little vexed that His Excellency did not accede to his request to have salutes fired for the crossing of the Chenab, which was undoubtedly a notable feat. As days rolled on everyone felt that the time had come to put an end to it all, while Attock, under Herbert with his Moslem levies still held out, and Dalhousie was naturally anxious to succour him. When on 3rd January came the news that Whish had stormed the city of Mooltan, but not yet the citadel, Dalhousie thought it was time to let Gough move. On the 18th December Sher Singh moved 10,000 men forward to Dinghi for some obscure reason, and as that threatened Wazirabad, Gough sent a force to cover those fords. With the news from Mooltan, Lord Dalhousie wrote to him that he thought he might now advance. On 10th January came news of the fall of Attock to the Afghans,

or rather Herbert's evacuation of the place, and then Major Mackeson, the political officer with Gough, whose business it was not, had the impertinence to urge Gough to advance before Chattar Singh should arrive.

Gough's own staff had long been anxious to do this, and Gough wrote to Dalhousie that he was now strong enough to attack Sher Singh. From Helan, the Sikh positions had been pretty fully reconnoitred and on the 10th Gough marched his whole force to Dinghi, a distance of twelve miles. This place was only eight miles from Rasool and its occupation barred the marching road to Wazirabad.

That night he summoned his commanders to hear his plans. These were, to advance a few miles to Chillianwallah, which was opposite the centre of the Sikh position, and from there carry out a more complete tactical reconnaissance before attacking. A memorandum in the writing of Colonel Patrick Grant reviews for him what was known of the enemy's strength on the 12th January, thus—

At *Lakhniwalla* the Sikh right, were the Bannu regulars under Ram Singh, one regiment of cavalry, four battalions of infantry with 11 guns.

At *Fateh Khan ki Chak* two cavalry corps, six battalions, some old some new, and 22 guns.

At *Lalian-wallah* Sher Singh himself with one regiment of cavalry, eleven battalions of infantry and 20 guns.

At *Rasool*, the extreme left, were two infantry corps and 5 guns.

At *Moong*, an illegible force, and 3 guns.

In fact, as Gough remarked at the close of his conference, "It looked like the devil's own fight," and so it did, and so it was.

The morning of 13th January was one of those

glorious Punjab winter mornings, sun shining, a mild frost, behind, the line of snowy mountains, in front, the rugged peaks and spurs of the Salt Range. The Army knew all about Alexander of Macedon and this is what they roared round the camp fires :

> "Oh! sabres drawn and bayonets fixed
> Fight where fought Alexander,
> For Paddy Gough's a cross betwixt
> Bulldog and Salamander."

Which was very good versifying and just about right.

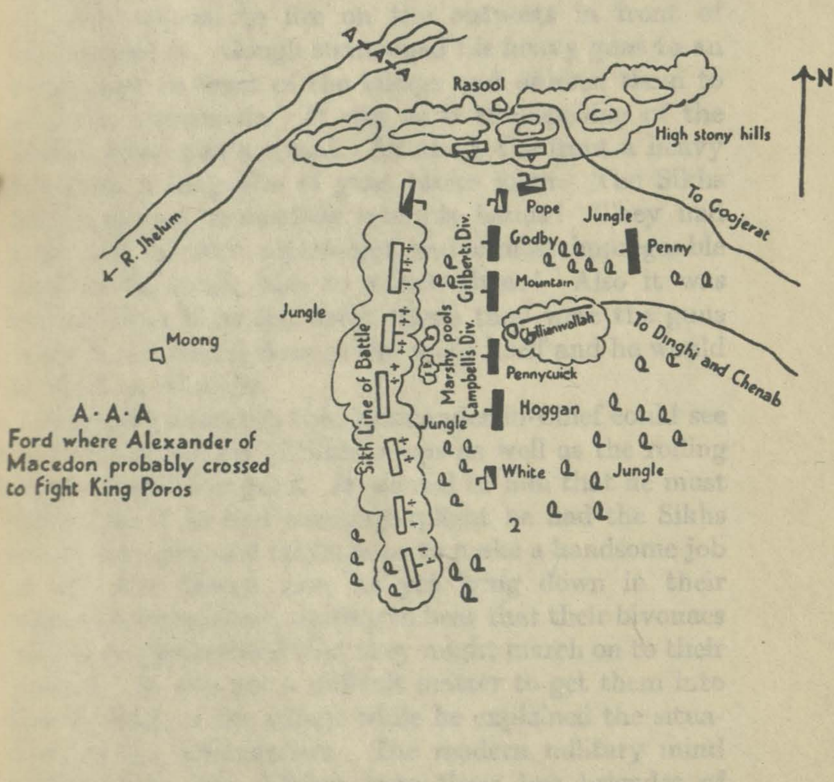
Between Dinghi and Chillianwallah was pretty thick scrub, which lost its wildness as the latter village was approached. The Army advanced in four columns, each of regimental columns, a hundred yards between each column, a brigade of cavalry on each flank, and each watching its own front. Happily the peaks of the Salt Range gave each a marching point.

It was noon as the force approached Chillianwallah to find a strong piquet on a mound in front of the village, which it took guns and the threat of a deployed attack to dislodge. Gough very properly decided that he would camp in rear of the village, reconnoitre, and issue his battle orders that night for the morrow's fight.

THE PYRRHIC VICTORY

The Chief looked on the country round him, seeing on his right Rasool with the hills of the hither Salt Range ; on his front, the peaks of the main range across the river and on the hither-bank a line of villages and then dense ravine jungle. On his left the jungle swept away as far as he could see, almost back to Helan whence he had come. It was evident that both the flanks were heavily protected and that it would have to be a frontal attack.

The BATTLE of CHILLIANWALLAH



The Chief could take his look with leisure. Behind him was the Quartermaster-General's staff laying out the vast camp, and further behind streaming through the trees and scrub came the baggage columns protected by the Irregular Cavalry. Engineer officers had been sent out to reconnoitre the roads and jungle in front. Then, quite unexpectedly, the Sikhs advanced some light guns and commenced to fire on the outposts in front of Chillianwallah. Gough summoned his heavy guns to an open space in front of the village and ordered them to stop the cannonade. It was as if the opening of the British guns was a signal. All along the front a heavy fire from a long line of guns broke forth. The Sikhs had delivered themselves into his hands! They had come out of their entrenched and almost impregnable position to entice him to attack them! Also it was evident that if he left them where they were the guns could be advanced close to the camp itself and he would be fired on all night.

From the housetop the Commander-in-Chief could see indistinctly masses of Sikh troops as well as the rolling smoke from their guns. It seemed to him that he must fight, and if he had enough daylight he had the Sikhs out in the open and might hope to make a handsome job of it. The troops were as yet lying down in their approach formations, waiting to hear that their bivouacs had been allotted and that they might march on to their ground. It was not a difficult matter to get them into line in front of the village while he explained the situation to the commanders. The modern military mind will at once ask, "What were these two brigades of cavalry doing to let their commander be so surprised?" The answer is, "What, indeed?" It is possible that they had found the jungles fairly clear in the morning, had brushed with the Sikh vedettes and that the Sikh

Army had come out behind them. In lesser tactical occasions it is no uncommon thing for such cunning birds as Boers to follow the day vedettes into camp. The Turks actually followed the Australian Mounted Brigade in, as it fell back at sundown, on the eve of the Battle of Romani in Sinai in 1916. History is silent on this matter, but obviously the true cavalry habit of piqueting the enemy was not present—the watching them and never leaving them.

The battlefield here was simple enough if it had not been for the mimosa thickets, the mass of *bhir* and thorn-bush of all kinds, at times so thick as to be impassable. The line being formed, it was to break into columns and advance on a deploying front through the jungle to the Sikh line, perhaps a mile and a half ahead, but no one quite knew where. Gough had calculated that when he had arranged for a guard for his camp he could fight with 12,000 men, Thackwell's two cavalry brigades in which Pope's had both the 9th Lancers and the 14th Light Dragoons, and five infantry brigades, two in Gilbert's Division and three in what was Thackwell's[1] (3rd) and was now commanded by Colin Campbell.

Gilbert's Division was to advance due east, its left in front of Chillianwallah, its right towards Rasool with Pope's Cavalry Brigade on its flank, Campbell's Division was on the left, with Horsford's heavy guns between the two, the light field batteries being with the divisions. Three troops of horse artillery were to go with White's Cavalry Brigade on the left, three with Pope on the right. For an hour the heavy guns pounded the Sikh line so far as they could see it, while the infantry lay down. Then towards 3.30, the whole line advanced. Gough, it will be noticed, kept no reserve to his own hand, but

[1] *Vide* Order of Battle on page 287.

while Gilbert had perforce to put both his brigades into the line, Campbell was able to keep his third (Penny) in reserve. Now there was less than a mile and a half to go, and it did not take long; but the troops had to get into various formations, to suit the ground, column, line, lines of company columns, etc. The stories of each brigade and battalion are wild and confused, some corps advanced in magnificent order others got badly mixed. Interesting as are the stories of each, we can scarcely follow them here.

It may be said generally that the Sikhs had drawn their line on the far side of a series of narrow clearings or patches where the jungle was less thick. As our attacking columns struggled through the thorns and the scrub they found themselves breathless and exhausted, at from one hundred to two hundred yards from the enemy's line of belching guns, with their infantry in line waiting to fire volleys. The battalions formed and charged to their front as best they could. Some got through the trenches and wheeled to clear the Sikh line, others were counter-attacked and faced all ways.

In front of Campbell's right brigade (Pennycuick) there was a line of buffalo-wallows, filled with water from the recent winter rains. Through this, after terrible jungle, the 24th had to slosh before they could level their bayonets. They had 204 killed, including 11 officers, and 276 wounded, including 10 officers.[1] Pennycuick the brigadier, who was really their regimental commander, was killed with his son, who died defending his wounded father from Sikh swordsmen. Campbell decided that he could not possibly control more than one brigade, so accompanied Hoggan who was as blind as a bat, and could

[1] The bodies of thirteen officers were laid out that night on the polished mess table which had actually been brought into the field, and which the faithful mess servants had got ready for the dinner that was not required.

not even tell which way his men faced and quite unfit thereby for his position.

Each brigade in turn as it struggled through levelled its bayonets and charged, cheers, cries and volleys intermingled, all within the space of an hour and a half. The guns were carried, the Sikhs defeated with terrible slaughter, and the British stood in the falling dark, the victors, with a heavy price paid. The sepoy battalions had fought with varying degrees of staunchness.

We know that the two sepoy battalions of Pennycuick's brigade were out-marched by the 24th Foot in the latter's desire to close on the guns that were destroying them. After suffering some 300 casualties between them, they both fell back to Chillianwallah.

We hear of another corps huddled together all talking and firing their rifles in the air. On the other hand several of them were magnificent to the mad joy and enthusiasm of their officers, the 56th for instance, in Mountain's Brigade of Gilbert's Division having over 300 casualties and still remaining a battalion in being and in heart. On the left, White's Cavalry Brigade had got wide, although its horse artillery under Brind materially assisted Campbell. The 3rd Light Dragoons repeated their Moodkee feats by constantly charging large bodies of the enemy behind their line, but the native light cavalry corps of the brigade more than once funked contact.

THE STORY OF "THREES ABOUT!"

The adventures of Pope's Cavalry Brigade on the right, their ignominious defeat, and the loss of their horse artillery guns, are the subject of controversy which still lives and even appears in the Press to-day on occasions.

If you were to go into the barracks of the 14th Hussars, who were the 14th Light Dragoons, and shout "*Threes about!*" you would have the wildest and freest riot imaginable, every recruit even with buckled belt in hand coming out to avenge the insult, though he would hardly know why.

Brigadier Pope was once a cavalry soldier, but was now an elderly gentleman whose verve and *élan* were long gone and whose eyesight was none too good. To put him in command was a mistake which neither Thackwell nor Gough should have tolerated. However, there he was in front of his brigade, brave enough God knows! leading it at a slow trot among the bushes and copses. Ahead of him were a good many Sikh Irregular Horse. The stupid old gentleman succeeded in leading his brigade at an angle instead of straight ahead and this masked the front of his horse artillery who could not fire. Suddenly an order was heard "*Threes about!*" and heard very distinctly, which appeared to come from the 14th, and was taken up and passed on. When a cavalry force advancing on its enemy goes about, even with the best intentions, and its enemy gallop after it, a movement to the rear becomes a gallop and a rout. Every man asking his neighbour "What was up?" added to the confusion. The whole of that brigade was therefore galloping hell for leather to the rear, riding over its own guns and finally most of it coming to rest amid the tent-ropes of the field hospitals in Gough's camp. The European troopers were rallied to some extent, behind Christie's guns, the Native Cavalry not till long after.

What had happened? Nobody knows! Was there a traitor? Not very likely! Had some Sikh trooper who had served with the cavalry got among them and given this traitorous and disastrous order? The men said so. The officers of the Native Cavalry were out in front

ground-scouting, and came galloping in before the Sikh Irregulars. Did they start a panic ? Again no one knows. It seems most probable that Pope who was badly wounded, finding he was over-riding his guns gave the order " *Threes Right !* " to uncover them and that someone started the order wrong. Whatever it was, this brigade with its two British regiments out of four was out of action all that afternoon.[1] Some of the brigade actually galloped over Gough and his staff who tried to rally them. They galloped over Huishe's and Christie's troops of artillery with the Sikhs close on their heels, so that four guns were actually carried off and six more put out of action, Christie himself, a famous officer, being mortally wounded.

However, even this tragedy did not affect the tactical victory which despite all the vicissitudes and losses had been handsomely won. Gough's instinct, and undoubtedly the proper one, was to stand on the ground he had won while he collected his wounded and removed the captured guns. Unfortunately ' old *Khabar-dar* ' was at hand and urged him to withdraw lest in a precarious state he be counter-attacked at night. At first the stout old man declared " I am d——d if I leave my wounded," but memories of Ferozeshuhr and perhaps the further advice of some of his staff were too much for him, for he marched back to camp some two to three miles. Alas ! all except twelve of the captured guns were recovered by the Sikhs and what was much worse his wounded were cruelly slaughtered, butchered as an amusement. Stripped naked, some were drawn backwards and forwards through the thorn bushes, a drummer lad wounded in a dooly was tossed in the air again and again, to be slashed at as he fell.

[1] Most of the 9th Lancers on flank guard with some Native Cavalry Squadrons were *not* involved.

THE MORNING AFTER

Next morning when he marched out, unfortunately in bitter cold rain,[1] the guns were gone and the wounded and the dead left out were found, slashed to pieces. The total losses of the divisions were not more than 2000 which was not too severe all things considered.

The British public in India, however, chose to consider the stubborn hard-fought victory a disaster. The abominable custom of the ill-informed pen which was unchecked in the regiments, produced in lurid type the sensuous impressions of each man's actual surroundings. Parliament at Home was stirred. There was a clamour for " little Gough's " recall. Sir Charles Napier, aged and none too fit, was sent out hurriedly, as the hot season was beginning. The Duke of Wellington said to him, " If you don't go I must," and Sir Charles came back, and aged and game and keen to the last, and mourning too for his old friend's sake.

Lord Dalhousie was naturally upset, and could but say that Gough's way alarmed him.

But if we examine the story we find, as most critics have found, that it was the circumstances, the errors of his troops, that produced such of the results as were evil. He could have stood his ground on the position he had won, for his camp was close by, and ere long signals, fires and willing hands would have made routes to get back the guns and wounded and to restore the survivors into an orderly force on the field.

However, there it was, and ere long the battlefield was cleared, the camp entrenched and when the rain stopped, sorrows were forgotten. It was only Pope's Cavalry Brigade that were sore at heart, but a Court

[1] Which lasted three days on end.

of Enquiry very properly exonerated the 14th to whom again it pleased the Public to give the blame.

But if the British in India were downcast, it is not to be wondered at, that their enemies rejoiced.

Lord Gough, however, remained watching Sher Singh, apparently unconcerned at the clamour.

CHAPTER XII

THE CROWNING MERCY, AND THE END OF THE WAR

AFTER CHILLIANWALLAH

WHOEVER won the Battle of Chillianwallah, Lord Gough stood his ground, entrenched himself, and threw out distant works which enabled him to see, and in a very few days the jungles round the camp were down, and no one could get near him unseen. The troops soon recovered, while Lord Dalhousie and everyone else saw that before the next move the divisions from Mooltan must march up. More troops also were dribbling up from below, for as might be expected Lahore was beside itself with excitement, to which the storming of Mooltan with pomp and circumstance came as a useful corrective. The Governor-General was still at Ludhiana waiting to come to Lahore as soon as he could do so as conqueror, with terms to dictate or decisions to declare.

But Attock had fallen, Dost Muhammad was in Peshawur, 5000 horse under Sirdar Akram Khan had arrived at Rasool, and Chattar Singh with the Sikh troops from Hazara and Peshawur was now marching hard to join Sher Singh, who was making all he could of Chillianwallah. The regiments engaged therein had not so much to say, for they had been very severely handled; on the other hand Christie's lost guns were made the most of.

When his reinforcements arrived, Sher Singh made several attempts to get Gough to come out into the plain,

and trailed his coat to the slopes of the hills. Lord Gough restrained his Irish anger and "sat very tight" in his entrenchments waiting for Whish. But Whish was lang o'coming. In the meantime his young British leaders of Irregular horse skirmished freely with the Sikh Cavalry, and such officers as Neville Chamberlain and others of the same kidney now and again trounced them handsomely. One thought was predominant in the Chief's mind, viz., that Sher Singh could not subsist his army much longer in the stony district in which he had sat himself, however formidable he had now made his position. He would be bound to try and get to the more fertile districts, and also for political reasons to get nearer the Sikh country, rather than remain among the Muhammadan folk who were none too friendly.

And all the while, every morning Sher Singh looked out hungrily on the British encampment with its lines of dressed tents, and saw the well-guarded food convoys come and go, and cursed himself . . . cursed himself in his heart of hearts for a mug. Someone had once shown him a bulldog and said they never let go, and here was a whole world of accursed bulldogs! Could the Army of the Elect destroy them?

And while he so looked, there was much trouble in the hill country among the lesser Rajput princelets. John Lawrence and his levies and Brigadier Wheeler from Jullundur, and his military column were kept active for many weeks, but the main campaign was not affected.

THE STORMING OF MOOLTAN

We must now turn aside to see General Whish, the experienced siege artilleryman who had seen Combermere take Bhurtpore, carry out the work to which Edwardes and Lake had summoned him so light-heartedly in July.

The force under Sher Singh having gone over to Moolraj, and stayed awhile on the north side of the fortress, then marched north to join his father and the other rebelling forces, and this as related, enabled Whish to close in round the city, but until the division from Bombay arrived, a long march by road and river, he was not prepared to attack and to storm. The Bombay column further had been delayed a month by tiresomeness on the part of the Bombay authorities. It was in the first half of November that Whish and his allies attacked and cleared the enemy from many of the messuages and tenements of the suburbs in what proved to be a severe fight. It by no means cleared the approach to the walls, but made the general advance an easier matter. It was not till the 22nd December that the Bombay column arrived, under Brigadier-General the Hon. H. Dundas, with the order of battle already detailed.

On the 25th December the original siege position was taken up and on the 27th the suburbs were finally cleared, the breaching batteries erected opposite the Khuni Burj and the Delhi gate. Then the roar of great guns, the true political officers of India, thrilled the country-side. On the night of the 29th the garrison, still full of heart, brought out 2000 men into the suburbs on the British left, and some sharp fighting took place. But it was about their last effort. If the British patience had been as prolonged as a summer's day, their arm was as long as a winter's night. A shell from one of Whish's mortars blew up a magazine in the citadel next morning at the precise hour of nine, destroying among others the grand mosque. The guns from it thereby ceased to fire.

On the 2nd January the Engineers having reported the breaches practicable, Whish issued orders for the assault of the city. A Bombay column led by the Bombay Fusiliers with the 4th and 19th Bombay Infantry, were

to storm the Khuni Burj breach, under Brigadier Stalker, and a Bengal column, the 32nd Foot at the head, with the 49th and 72nd Bengal Infantry under Brigadier Markham, was to storm the breach in the Delhi gate. Here something had gone wrong in the Engineers' reconnaissance, for when the stormers arrived they could see the crumbling breach in the gate all right, but between them and it was an intact city wall, thirty feet high, hidden by low ground. As soon as Markham had realized how badly the staff and engineers concerned had let them down, he marched his force after Stalker's column to enter by that breach, and then regain his proper position by filing round within the walls.

Stalker's column found no such trap, and the Bombay Fusiliers scrambled up the debris under a hot fire. Sergeant John Bennet of the Fusiliers drove the pole of the colour he was carrying into the rubble on the top, and stood by it as the stormers passed him cheering. It was difficult going, getting down into the city, till the sappers could improve it, but the column rushed on, leaping from the walls to find themselves lost in narrow streets, engaged in hand-to-hand conflicts, but driving all before them.

For some astounding reason, Whish did not launch the attack at all till noon. And as it was close to the shortest day in the year, the columns, which were not inside till 4 p.m., were soon overcome by darkness in the streets, amid fierce conflicts, burning houses, exploding magazines, by one of which many men were lost. Nevertheless the Bombay Brigade, in three columns, steadily penetrated into the interior from which, of course, all the civil inhabitants had long since fled.

By morning the defenders were all slain or gone, pursued by Edwardes' levies, and Lake's Daudputras, who had occupied the Pak gate during the assault. The

British losses were not too severe for the result, being 30 killed and 218 wounded.

There now only remained the Citadel, in which some 3000 of the enemy still held out.[1]

The siege batteries were now moved round to the north-west face of the Citadel walls, and a heavy bombardment opened. The garrison could with difficulty work their guns from the bursting of the British high-angle mortar fire, and ere long Moolraj asked for terms. As unconditional surrender was the only reply, he continued to hold out. Ere long seven 18-pounders and six 24's were got to work, with three 10-inch mortars to assist, and a serious attack on the counterscarp prepared with a long sap through the glacis. From the city side more guns and mortars were put in battery. By now the garrison began to desert, either to surrender or to slip into the open country in which they were generally captured. At last after more attempts to get terms, Moolraj and between 3000 and 4000 of his men, being in the last extremity, surrendered at discretion, as the sound of the salvos rolled and reverberated over the country-side. That was the end of it; Moolraj's trial is an amazing sidelight on the ways of Sikh and Eastern Durbars. He was spared the death sentence, but sent to confinement, where he soon died. The sepoy who had murdered Vans Agnew and had survived, was hung. That was the end of Mooltan, save for the solemn re-interring in the Citadel of the two victims of the original tragedy, as already described.

The story of this siege, the levy campaign of Edwardes and the first failures of the siege, are all remarkable, and it is quite possible to accuse those concerned of a certain amount of footle. It is for consideration whether Whish even after Sher Singh's defection, could not have made

[1] It proved to have been actually 4000.

more headway. But on the other hand, the campaign of the levies and the Muhammadan regulars was a matter of prestige, kept a vast country-side quiet and dominated.

Whish's force for some time was but in the position of the policeman holding the ring, while the Durbar and its allies settled their own affairs! Mooltan also had the useful rôle of being the southern centre to which all *mufsids*, all disturbers of the peace, elected to go, a function which Delhi and Lucknow equally served in 1857. Moolraj and all his merry men were there in a ring-fence with their weird surely waiting for them to dree.

As soon as it was over, Whish, leaving a force of all arms in possession, was now able to march a strong division and cavalry brigade to join Gough, via the left bank of the Chenab, impressing the country with the sight of a victorious army on the way to fresh successes. This column as it joined Gough consisted of Slater's Cavalry and the brigades of Hervey and Markham of the Bengal Divisions, and that of Dundas of the Bombay force, with which were both the Bombay Fusiliers and the 60th Rifles. The distance to be covered was a long one, though the troops marched fast and hard.

THE BATTLE OF GOOJERAT

Turning back to the main theatre on the Jhelum, we find on the 11th February, that Sher Singh, as was anticipated, was obliged to move his force to a more favourable locality, and on the afternoon of that day attacked Gough's right with his horse. It had been but a feint and a screen, for in the morning, he was gone, full march towards Goojerat, though that was not at first realized. Gough was criticized for allowing the Sikh Army to

stream past him, on a narrow passage between his position and the hills. The Sikh Army itself, however, went at night, but the mass of baggage must have been moving well after daylight. It has been said that the Commander-in-Chief thought, if he thought at all, that it would be a mistake to interfere with him or force him back into the hills. He wanted to get him into the open, and destroy him with some possibility of decent manœuvre, and we may be sure that Pat Grant must have impressed this on him. At his side still was no less a person than Henry Lawrence himself who had been with him, indeed, since before Chillianwallah. Barely rested though he was, that officer, the moment that the news of the fall of his card-house reached him in England, had asked to be allowed to return, and Lord Dalhousie sent him to the Army. There his first-hand knowledge of personalities, people and problems was of infinite service, and he knew enough of the world and the Army to refrain from irritating the soldiers by trying to come the old-fashioned political.

On the 13th February, Brigadier Cheap rode into Chillianwallah with a few Irregulars to take up the Chief Engineership, informing Lord Gough that the Mooltan Force was pushing on at twenty miles a day. Next day it was ascertained that the Sikhs had moved to Goojerat, and were in position facing south from that old town. Gough broke up his camp on the 15th and made for the Chenab, which it was important that Sher Singh should not cross. By the 18th he was at Kunjah, half-way between Sadoolapore and Goojerat, having passed within sight of the enemy, well covered by his own cavalry. Kunjah commanded the fords at Wazirabad, which were already held by a British force. On the 20th he moved up closer to Goojerat, his outposts being in touch with the enemy, and on the 19th and 20th the



THE SECOND SIKH WAR

The Battle of Goojerat, February 21st, 1849. Afghan horse are seen galloping *behind* British line, through which they had broken.

pressing unless the Sikhs could be smashed. By 7 a.m. the British force was drawn up in a long line, magnificent in its order, its uniforms and its flashing sabres and bayonets. Between the two nullahs were Gilbert's Division on the left, with Mountain's and Penny's Brigades in line, then big guns, and then Whish's Division of Hervey's and Markham's Brigades, the former only in the front line. On the right, between Whish and the Kathala stream, were Lockwood's and Hearsey's Cavalry Brigades.

On the left of the Dwara *nullah* was Campbell's Division, to which Dundas' Bombay Brigade had been added, with Dundas', McLeod's and Carnegys' Brigades in line. Thus Gilbert's Division was in the centre. On the left of Campbell was Thackwell with Scott's Cavalry Brigade, and in rear a special reserve in charge of Hoggan, consisting of the 5th and 6th Light Cavalry, the 45th and 69th Bengal Infantry and the Bombay Light Field Battery.

In their front was the Sikh Army also arrayed. It was just such a scene as may be viewed in miniature in a London toyshop window, lines of red and blue soldiers, their colours in the centre, bands in rear, the guns of the numerous horse-artillery troops polished and shining like the golden cannon of the toyshop also.

Behind were the lofty houses of Goojerat, one of those glorified villages which through the ages have risen higher and higher on the debris of their predecessors Behind it again was the Snowy Line of the Pir Panjal looking so near, and so dazzling on that glorious cold-weather morning, that you could see every cleft and gully, and would almost throw a stone over the intervening thirty miles.

What a glorious scene for God's creatures to destroy each other in! But the young blood was mantling, and

the thousand feet that stepped like one listened for the quickstep, and men's minds turned to the cruel massacre of wounded at Chillianwallah, and officers thought of Vans Agnew and Anderson, murdered to make a Sikh holiday. Over the way a mile or so, the Sikh Army stood rigid, with the fervour of the Khalsa in their hearts, and the fierce joy of battle in their eyes, fierce for the famous religion, fiercer for the memory of old Runjhit Singh the Lion, who had made them a nation, a nation that nothing but their own mad folly, and that of their incompetent, selfish chiefs was now to bring so low.

Gough's plan was simple enough. He would penetrate the Sikh centre, allow the left wing to cross the dry nullah, which further on trended to the left, and then with the right, envelop the bulk of the enemy.

At 7.30 the bands struck up, and their Chief rode down the line in his white fighting-coat that all the world might see, to the roar of cheers. Then the whole line went forward as if in review order, as on a vast ceremonial parade. The line had not been long in motion when great puffs of white smoke rolled out along the ground in the dew-laden air from the Sikh line of guns. The British line halted, for the most part out of range, and the horse artillery galloped forward, the bullock teams of the heavy pieces leading them out in front at a slower pace. Soon the whole of the Sikh and British artillery were roaring at each other, and for two or three hours endeavoured, as it were, to shout each other down. Now and again a British waggon or a limber blew up, but the British guns were on handsome terms, and the explosions among the Sikh batteries frequent, while their gun-carriages were smashed and blown high.

The hour of victory was at hand. The infantry were ordered to rise and the line was deployed and dressed

again. Some Afghan Horse had got round and were trying to cut down the drivers of the gun teams, only to be driven forth by the Irregular Cavalry.

The advance of the line necessitated the storming of the two Kalras, both of which were desperately defended, and well loopholed. Kalra Kalan on the left was tackled by Penny's Brigade, the 2nd Bengal Europeans doing most of the work with the bayonet. Hervey's Mooltan Brigade with the 10th Foot and 8th Bengal Infantry, led by Franks of the 10th, took Kalra Khurd after an equally stubborn struggle. Then the line advanced once more, the heavy guns moving forward as promptly as the light by alternate batteries, the Horse Artillery and the Light Field Batteries pushing well forward. Except to storm the two Kalras, the infantry barely took their firelocks from their shoulders. The battle was won . . . won, too, by the Sikhs' own recipe of plenty of big guns.

It was said in the Army that when Gough climbed to the roof of a house as his command station, Pat Grant took the ladder away so that he should not get down too soon and order the line to advance before the guns had done their smashing work. There was no truth in it, for the old soldier had learnt the lesson of the guns, but it is not an undesirable tribute by his brethren-in-arms to his desire for cold steel, which at all times is the outward and visible sign of the will to win.

It now only remained to occupy the whole Sikh camp, collect the wounded, and captured guns, and organize pursuit. The Irregular Cavalry and Horse Artillery pushed on forthwith, keeping it up for seventeen miles, picking up several guns dropped in the flight and many arms thrown away by the infantry in their haste.

THE SURRENDER OF THE SIKH ARMY

It was an absolute crushing victory won at the small cost to the British of 96 killed and 700 wounded; the Sikhs lost 53 guns and most of their colours, although their actual losses in men were not very heavy. But without guns, and marching hard to escape, their fighting *moral* was gone for ever.

Next morning Gilbert with his own unmatched division, and a considerable force of cavalry took up the pursuit on the road to the north, while Campbell marched off towards Bhimber under the high hills, where rumour said a part of the defeated army had retreated. He proceeded twenty-five miles, picked up two abandoned guns, found no one and returned. Gilbert pushed hard for the main crossing of the Jhelum, and after three days' hard trek of over sixteen miles a day, arrived on the 24th at Naurangabad, where he learnt that the Sikh main body was crossing the Jhelum. Galloping on with the 14th Light Dragoons and the 12th Irregulars he found them just over the river, and busy on the opposite bank, burning and destroying all the ferry-boats. A large force, assumed to be Irregulars, as there were no redcoats among them, were on the banks. That night Brigadier Hearsey, the famous leader of Irregular Horse, joined him with the 3rd and 9th Irregular Cavalry. The difficulties of crossing the Jhelum with the ferry-boats burnt was considerable, but by the 28th he had got his main force across and into the town of Jhelum, which had been, however, in Hearsey's hands for two days.

The passage of the Salt Range was no easy matter, nor the feeding of his army, and it was not till the 8th March that Gilbert got his troops up to within thirty miles

of Rawalpindi, where he heard the enemy's regulars, 16,000 strong, had halted to rest.

That day the British prisoners taken at Peshawur, George Lawrence, Herbert and some ladies were sent in. Here must be mentioned an incident that is well worthy of record, and went far, it is said, to satisfy the Sikh Sirdars as to the manner of men they would have to deal with. After Chillianwallah, Sher Singh had sent Lawrence into Gough's camp with a message to Henry Lawrence, and a request for terms that were entirely unacceptable. George Lawrence, to the intense surprise and admiration of the Sirdars, came back with the stern refusal. They had not expected him to put his neck in the noose again if he had no good news for them.

It was expected that Sher Singh who had 30 light guns with him, gathered from various sources, would try one more battle with Gilbert. But the game was up and he knew it. The Sikhs were dead weary after their hasty retreat and they were in a none too friendly country. Their Afghan allies, doubtful friends at best, had no ideas beyond saving their own skins. Sher Singh therefore followed the prisoners in, and asked for terms. Not only was unconditional surrender demanded, but there must be a formal filing past of the Sikh Army and a depositing of arms in proper style. The Sikh regular soldier must know and see his master! Sher Singh could but accept and went back to arrange the surrender, while Gilbert marched on ready to fight at once if needs be.

On the 10th at Mankyala, Sirdar Khan Singh Mejithya with 1000 men and some guns surrendered. Next day on the left bank of the Sohan close to Rawalpindi, Chattar Singh and Sher Singh, his son, with 17 guns, gave themselves up. It was not till the 14th on the great plain outside Rawalpindi, the British Army

cleaned and polished, in line with bayonets fixed, received that proud though beaten army as one soldier should receive another. As the colours dipped the regiments marched along the British line, piled their arms, flung down their swords, unharnessed their guns and went their way.

Because the British knew their job, because the Sikhs were hungry, every man who wanted it received two rupees, equal to a fortnight's subsistence, with an injunction not to plunder the folk on their way home. The *reverse* of the Punjab medal shows the scene in relief, and a magnifying glass will show the fine detail. 20,000 stands of arms, and 41 guns in all, were handed over, and the Sikh Army vanished for ever in that form. Among the fighting men of India of the future a still more glorious rôle was to remain for them. The men of sympathy present—and they were many—told pathetic tales of this surrender, and how, for the moment, the loss of all that they treasured shook the veterans of Runjhit Singh to bitter tears.

THE PURSUIT OF THE AFGHANS

The Sikh soldiery might trudge off to their homes. Not so the British Indian Army. The war for them was not over till the last Afghan was hustled and kicked through the Khaiber.

Next day Gilbert the horseman was on the move, with a large portion of his infantry and most of his cavalry, reaching Jani Ka Sang, where the Nicholson monument stands, 17½ miles from Pindi, that night, and the next day marched 14 more to Wah. There he learnt that the Indus Bridge was still standing, and that the Afghans were occupying Attock Fort. Wah to Attock is 31



LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR JOHN BENNET HEARSEY, K.C.B.

Who led the Irregular Cavalry in pursuit of the Afghans after Goojerat (in dress as Colonel of the 2nd Bengal Irregular Cavalry).

miles. Leaving Wah on the evening of the 16th, the whole force marched throughout the night, with a short rest at Burhan, and at dawn reached Shumsabad. Feeding and watering his horses, and leaving his infantry to rest and follow, Gilbert started off again, to reach the Indus with his cavalry at 11.30 a.m., his guns coming up at 1 p.m. There he found the fortress of Attock abandoned, and the Afghan rearguard crossing the bridge of boats. Hardly had his troops shown themselves when the Afghans cut the bridge, but as they did so the bulk of it swung over to the British side. On the opposite bank the whole of the Afghan force was visible, three batteries in action, regular infantry, and horse, and a crowd of wild men. But in spite of the wide Indus to protect them, they were off before even the guns had come up.

Only a few boats at the far side had been burnt by the Afghans, and the British sappers and expert Indus boatmen soon got the bridge relaid. By the 18th, the second morning after his arrival at Attock, Gilbert crossed and marched for Peshawur, which he reached on the 21st. But the Dost was gone; gone with his guns and his infantry and his what-nots, and as Gilbert's cavalry swept up to Jamrud they were just in time to see the rear-guard of Akram Khan's horse from Goojerat, scuttling through the Khaiber to the shelter of Ali Musjid. To use the expression that the Sikhs applied to their temporary allies, the British kicked them "like dogs" out of the Peshawur Valley, where they have never been since, not even when the foresworn Amanullah tried to catch the demobilizing Indian Army bending in 1919, and was severely defeated for his pains.

So that was the end of the Punjab Campaign which is also known as the Second Sikh War, and the last of those

five wars which the East India Company's Armies were to fight, drawn on by the strange lure of the Indus and the ghost of the Mogul Raj.

THE ANNEXATION OF THE PUNJAB

Before we close this swan song of John Company, we must see Lord Dalhousie and the military authorities settle the Punjab, and take the little Maharajah to become a country gentleman in England. See them, too, so handle the Sikhs and the Punjab generally, that they turned with us to subdue the mutinous Bengal Army in 1857, and once more carry the Union Jack from the Great Wall of China to the flats of Flanders. Lord Gough, after Goojerat, that Crowning Victory which, as has been said, the wags called the "Crowning Mercy," was very busy with his headquarters in planning with the Governor-General the military garrisoning of the country, and also himself preparing to hand over to his successor and superseder. But it was to the great joy of all the Army, a supersession in the midst of a triumph. Goojerat was the greatest victory that India had seen, and it was fought simply, soundly, successfully. Chillianwallah and its unjust criticisms, and its aftermath of contemptible hysteria, was forgotten. England gave the gallant little soldier a viscounty, and all the Army rejoiced.

Lord Dalhousie was now in close conclave with those at Lahore as to the future of the Punjab. He was not too friendly to Henry Lawrence and his views, for reasons that need not be entered into. Lord Hardinge's generous experiment of a Sikh Kingdom had failed, as many prophesied it would, failed because there were no possible group of public-spirited men to whom the government could be trusted. Lord Dalhousie himself

proclaimed annexation, and this the Directors of the Company and the British Government accepted. The Koh-i-noor, the "mountain of lights," the ancient Turkish diamond that Nadir Shah had stolen from the Mogul, that Ahmed Shah had stolen in turn, and which Runjhit Singh had taken from Shah Shujah, now stands among the Crown jewels of England.

The little Maharajah presented no great difficulty. Few believed in his legitimacy, which had only been a convenient fiction of the Sikh Durbar before the invasion of India by the *Punchayats*. He could be happily, pensioned,[1] and as a matter of fact, after a short residence in India, was brought to England, and a house and estate in Kent was provided for him. There, as his friend, Colonel Sleeman, wrote, "you, a Jut Sikh, will be among your own people; the men of Kent are Juts from Jutland," and no doubt he was right. The story of Dhuleep Singh in later life is a pleasant memory of Victorian days, devoid of all tragedy.

The affairs of the Punjab were to be managed, not by a Governor or a High Commissioner, but by a Board of Revenue, of which Sir Henry Lawrence was to be President, and his brother John, the trained civilian, and another civilian, Mr. Charles Mansell, to be shortly relieved by Mr. Robert Montgomery, were the members.

To the remarkable young men of the Durbar period, they were now to be allowed to add by the same process, the dipping of their hands into the personnel pocket of the Military and Civil Services of India. Young men were to come who were to work day and night in their shirt sleeves to build a prosperous and contented province. How it was done is a story and an epic in itself, and the proof of the good building of Dalhousie

[1] His pension was £50,000 a year.

and the Punjab Board was first of all to be seen in the crisis of 1857, and still remains in this remarkable northern Province of India.

THE END OF THE COMPANY'S TASK

With the annexation of the Punjab, the frontiers of India had been extended not only to the Indus, but to the foot of the hills beyond, and as it was then, with a few minor adjustments, so stand the frontiers of India to this day. It has been shown how these five campaigns were unsought, save the first, and that all came either from the hypnotic lure of the Mogul limits, or from the irresistible tendency for those who controlled the destinies of India to take the limits that that Empire had. The bringing of Afghanistan into the definite sphere waited for a while, and yet from the date of Herbert Edwardes' Treaty with the Dost in 1856, a treaty signed by John Lawrence almost under protest, to the Afghan War of 1919, Afghanistan was definitely in one way or another, within the Indian sphere. She is out for a while, owing perhaps to bad policy and war-tired minds, and murders her monarchs merrily, in the old Afghan way. But nominally in, or nominally out, without the friendly support of Great Britain in India, no ruler can rule that country long.

The Great Company had nearly outlived its lease when the Punjab was annexed, and this great anomaly of the world was bound to pass ere long. The tempestuous times of 1857, the not-undeserved Mutiny of the Bengal Army, did actually hasten the dissolution. It was, in the long period of its existence, a wonderful conception handling the greatness thrust on it in a remarkable way, which alone is example enough of the British genius for organization. Let it once again be repeated that the

territorial India of the Crown is the territorial India of the Company, who, if you like so to phrase it, did all the dirty work for the Crown. One of the most difficult pieces of that work, which is outside this story but should be referred to, was the annexation of Oudh. That merely altered the method of control of that great province which, had it remained under its own kings, would have been to-day but another Hyderabad, with its runaway Mogul Viceroy as its ruler, as one of the Indian States.

For seventy years had it called to high heaven for the cleansing of its Augean stable. Remonstrance fell so long and so often on deaf ears that at last the Company foreclosed. By so doing it may have caused the mutiny of the Bengal Army; it certainly turned that mutiny into a rebellion and a war. But it made the miserable kingdom into one of the most prosperous and fertile provinces of India. Lord Dalhousie remained as Governor-General till 1856, losing his beautiful consort, undermining his own over-engined frame, and driving India to a modern sense of progress and advancement, which was, however, terribly thrown back by the disastrous happenings which accompanied the Mutiny. Dalhousie was in his time what Curzon was half a century later, but India has long forgotten all she owes to that dynamic personality.

To-day, when clever young men are designing a new heaven and a new earth, and some would say a new hell, it is no bad thing to take a dip into the back pages that this short story of the wars endeavours to turn over. The story of how an Indian court and province, left to itself, wallowed in crime and vice unbelievable, and how two armies got out of hand and eventually compassed their own destruction, is not without its moral and its application.

To those who love the men of wars and arms, the story of those patient Indian Armies, backed by the glorious British Line, struggling through this decade of interminable war; the thought of those officers of the Bengal Army dead to make a mutineers' holiday, or else eating their hearts out in retirement as regimentless officers, is a sad one. The honour and memory of one's regiment is as the honour and the memory of one's wife. When both are gone it is a pitiful thing. And so it has come about that save the few surviving British corps, there are none to keep green the glory of these ten years of what was nearly always victory. And the European regiments of the Company—because of their recruiting field transferred to the Irish portion of the British Line—have also, alas! for different reasons been sent the way of the faithless. That is a tragedy with which the acquiescent British public are themselves concerned, and may their complacency never come back on them!

It is sad to think that the "Dirty Shirts"[1] are now of no more account than the 16th Grenadiers of Kandahar fame. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

[1] The affectionate name for the rough and ready European of the Company's Army—primarily the nickname of the Bengal Fusiliers.

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THE

HISTORY OF SIND

AS TOLD

BY ITS OWN HISTORIANS

THE MUHAMMADAN PERIOD

EDITED FROM THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS

OF THE LATE

SIR H. M. ELLIOT. K.C.B.,

EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE,

BY

PROFESSOR JOHN DOWSON, M.R.A.S